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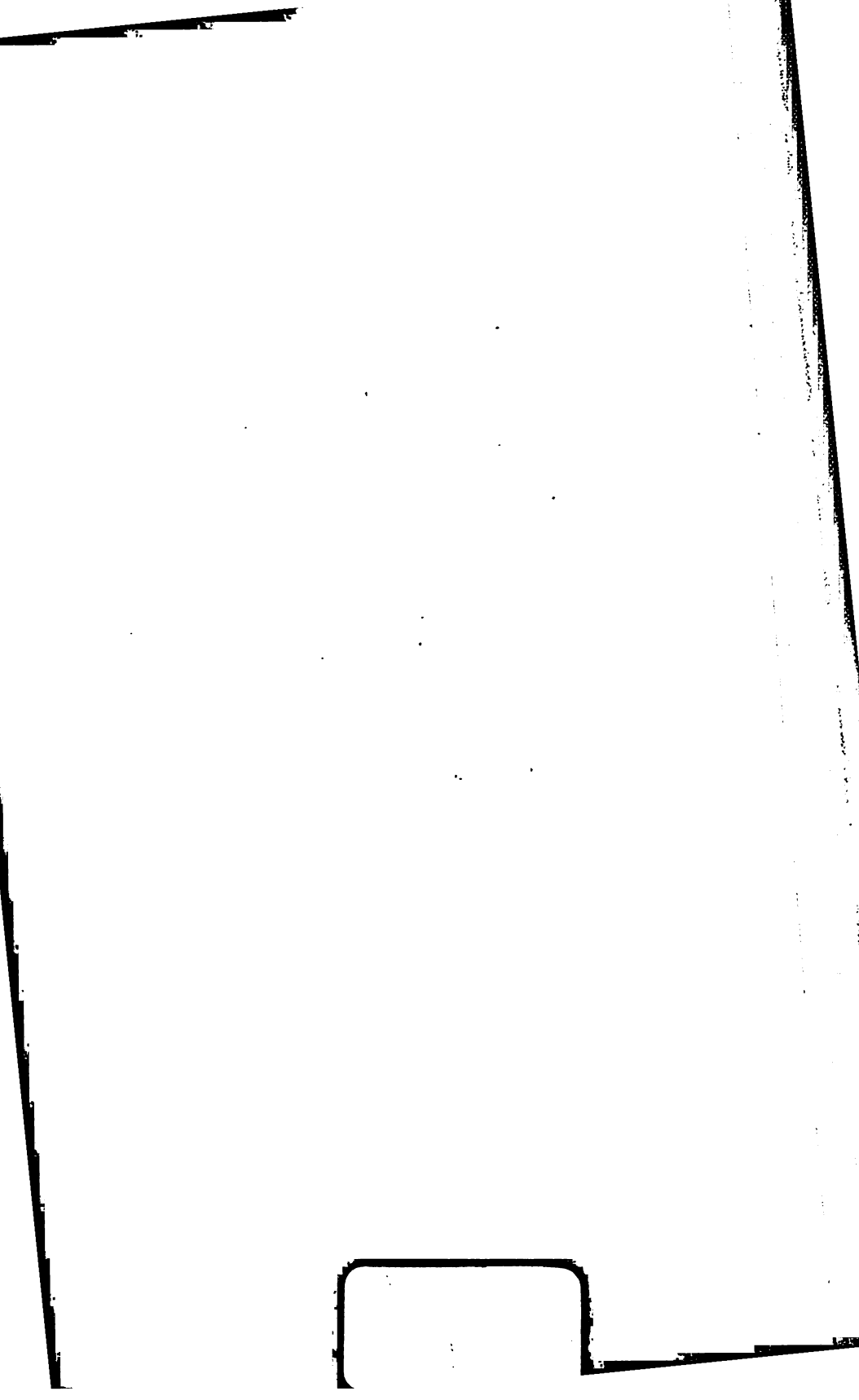
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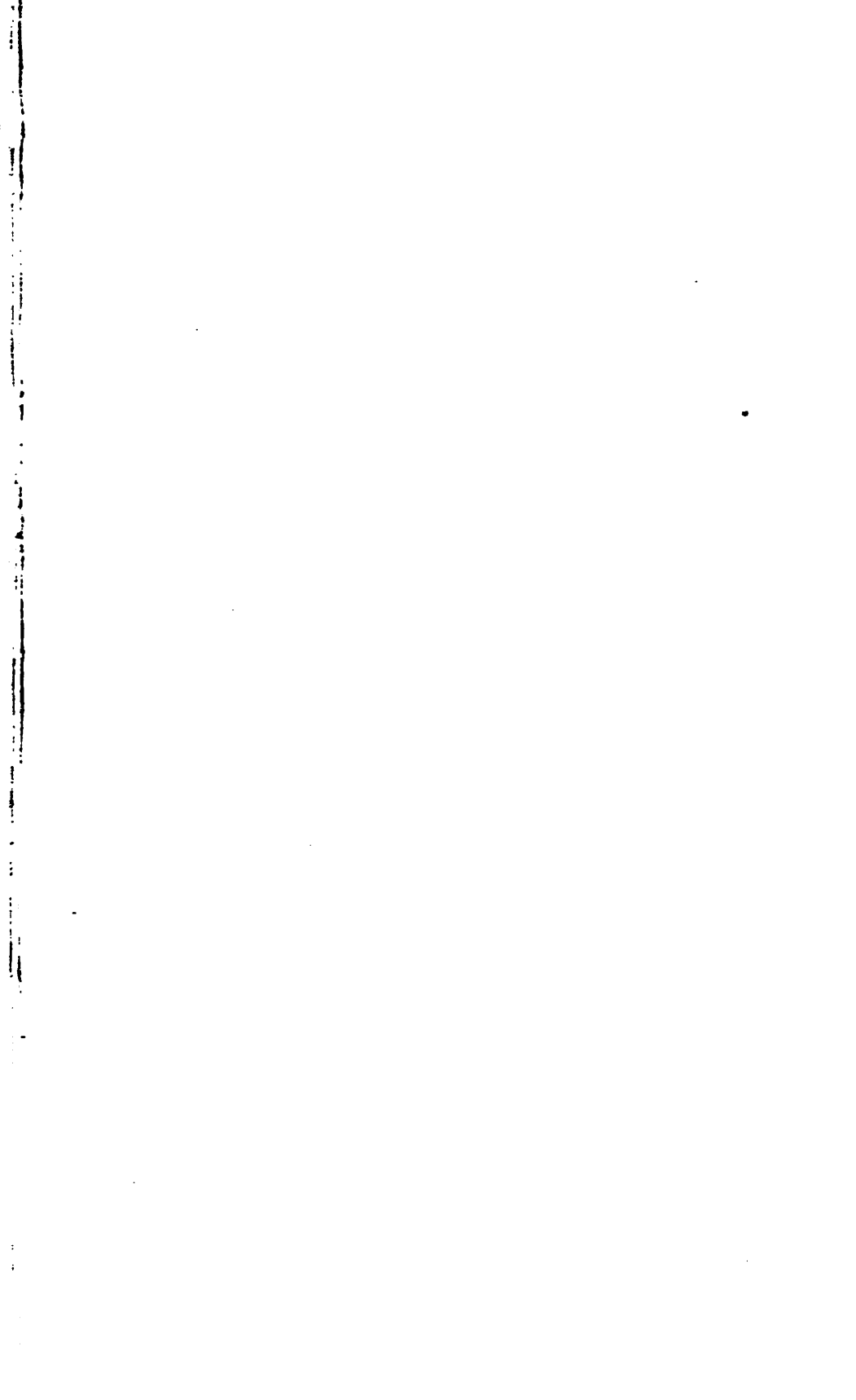
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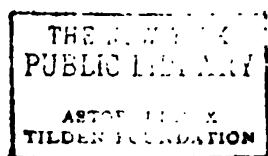
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A

HERO OF THE PEN.

BY

E. WERNER,

AUTHOR OF "GOOD LUCK," "BROKEN CHAINS," ETC.

TRANSLATED BY

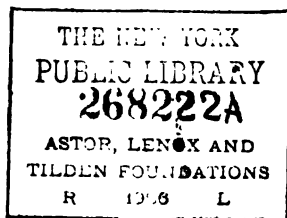
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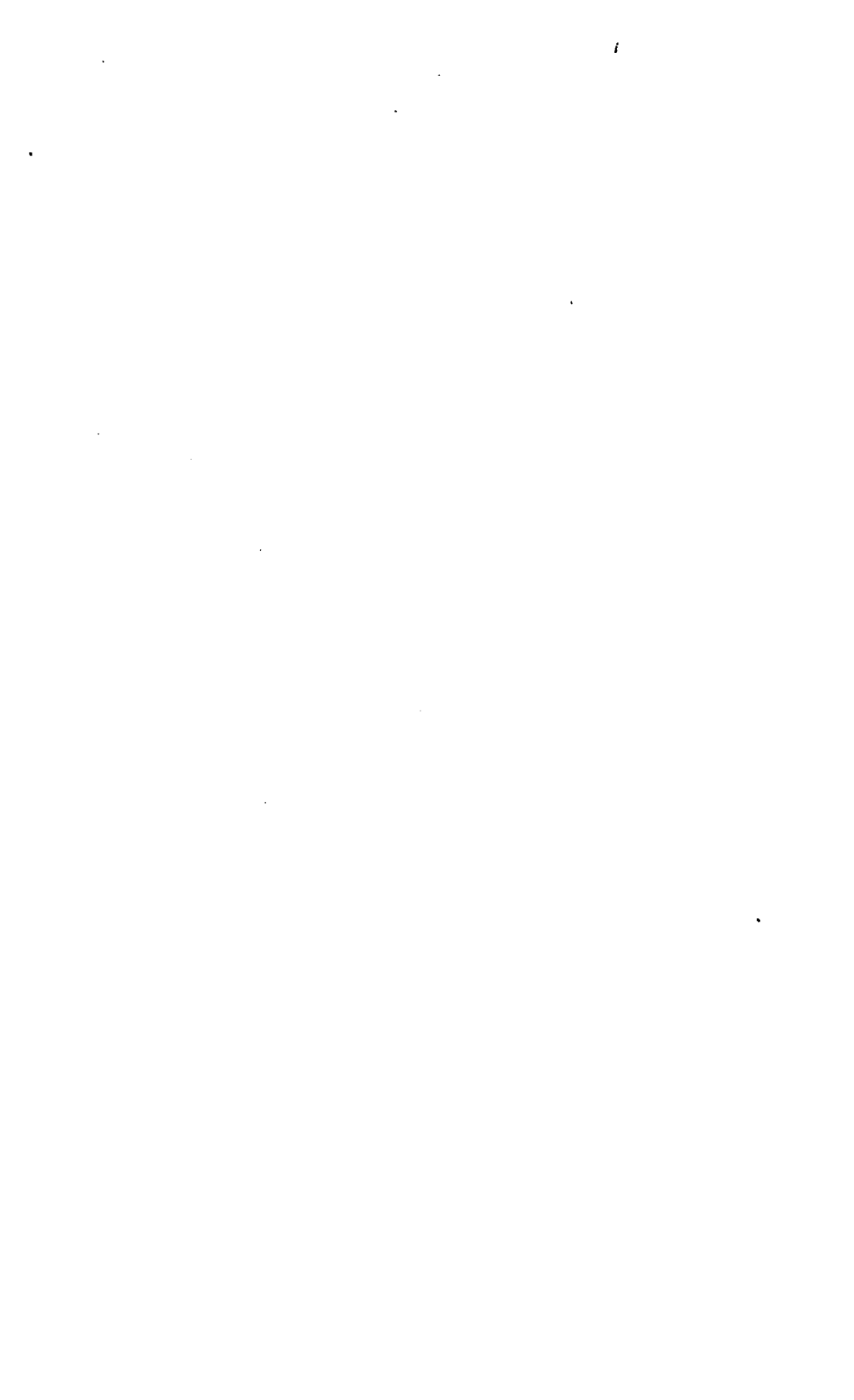
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A HERO OF THE PEN.

CHAPTER I.

LOVE AND DEATH.

The scene of our story is a town on the Mississippi, about midway in its course from Lake Itasca to the Gulf; the time is a cloudless January day of the year 1871. A score of years ago, this town consisted of only a dozen or so roughly built wooden houses; but emulating the marvellous growth of American cities, it has expanded into a populous, thriving business centre.

The dazzling, midday sunbeams enter the windows of a large, suburban mansion, situated upon a hill commanding an unequalled prospect. The elegance of its surroundings, the exquisite taste and richness of its appointments, its artistic and expensive construction, distinguish this residence of the millionaire, Forest, from all others far and near.

In the magnificent parlor, giving evidence of that superfluity of ex-

pensive comfort and luxury which to wealthy Americans seems an absolute necessity of life, sits a young lady, in an elaborate and costly home dress. She is a girl of some twenty summers, and sitting near the open fire, whose shifting gleams light up her face and form, with her head resting thoughtfully in her hand, she listens to the conversation of the man opposite her. The face a perfect oval, of a clear, colorless, brunette complexion, with large, brown eyes and perfectly regular features, is set in a frame of dark, luxuriant hair, and possesses undeniable claims to beauty. And yet there is something wanting in this exquisite face. It is that joyous, artless expression which so seldom fails in youth; that breath of timidity we look for in young maidenhood, and that look of gentleness a woman's face seldom entirely lacks, and never to its advantage. There is a chilling gravity in this young girl's whole

appearance, a confident repose, an undeniable self-consciousness; and yet it does not seem as if heavy life-storms or premature sorrows can have brought to her the sad experiences of later years. For this her brow is all too smooth—her eyes too bright. Either inborn or inbred must be that seriousness through which her beauty gains so much in expression, although it loses infinitely in the tender grace and charm of both.

In a low arm chair, on the other side of the fireplace, sits a young man in faultless society-dress. There is marked similarity between these two. It lies not alone in hair and eyes of the same color, in the same clear, pale complexion. It is more in that expression of cold, dignified repose, and self-conscious pride peculiar to both. In the young girl this expression assumes the most decided form; in the young man it is partially hidden by a conventional polish and formality, which much detract from the manly beauty of his face, and the manly dignity of his bearing. He has for some time been engaged in an animated conversation with the young lady, and now continues a recital already begun:—

“My father thinks this European journey necessary for the completion of my mercantile education, and I readily yield to his wishes, as it promises so much of interest

to me. I shall first pass a few months in New York, where the business affairs of our house demand my personal supervision, and from there I shall sail for Europe in March. A year will suffice me to gain some acquaintance with England, France and Germany, and for a short tour through Switzerland and Italy. The next spring I hope to return home.”

The young lady had listened with evident approval to the plan of the proposed journey; now she raised her head and looked at the speaker.

“A rich, profitable year lies before you, Mr. Alison! My father will regret that his illness renders it impossible to see you before your departure.”

“I also regret that Mr. Forest is too ill to receive my adieux, personally. May I beg you, Miss, to present them to him in my name?”

She bowed slightly. “Certainly! And meantime, accept my best wishes for a prosperous journey and a happy return.”

With quiet friendliness she rose and reached him her hand. He took the cold, beautiful hand, and held it fast; but an unwonted expression flashed from the young man's eyes.

“Miss Forest, may I ask you a question?”

A momentary flush passed over the young girl's face, as she replied:

"Speak, Mr. Alison!"

He rose hastily, and still holding the hand fast, he stepped closer to her side.

"Perhaps the time for a declaration is ill-chosen; but I only too well know that Miss Forest is the object of so many solicitations that absence might be dangerous to my hopes. Therefore, pardon me, Miss Jane, if I at this moment venture to speak of an affection which, perhaps, is no secret to you. May I hope that my wishes may find fulfilment, and that, upon my return, I may be allowed to clasp this hand anew, and hold it fast for life?"

He had begun in a calm, almost business sort of way, but his voice grew warm, as if beneath this outward calm there lay an almost violently repressed emotion; and now, in consuming anxiety, his eyes hung upon hers, as if there he would read her answer.

Miss Forest had listened in silence. No flush of surprise, or maidenly embarrassment, not the slightest change in her features betrayed whether this proposal was welcome or unwelcome to her; the immobility of her face offered a striking contrast to his, and the reply came firm and distinct, without the least hesitation or concealment.

"My answer shall be frank as your question, Mr. Alison. I am aware of your affection for me; I reciprocate it, and upon your re-

turn, with the fullest confidence I will place my hand in yours for a united future."

A beam of joy broke through the icy repose of Alison's features, but the usual calmness at once came back, and he seemed almost ashamed of the momentary emotion.

"Miss Jane, you make me very happy," he said. "Can I not now speak with your father?"

"No, I would prefer to tell him myself," she replied hastily. "I have one condition to impose, and you must yield to it, Mr. Alison; I cannot become your betrothed at my father's death-bed; I cannot and will not deprive him of one of those hours the new relation might demand. Therefore let the words you have just spoken to me remain secret, at least to all but those immediately concerned. Until you return, demand from me none of the rights my answer gives you; I cannot and will not now grant them."

There lay little of a betrothed bride's submission in this decided, "*I will not!*" at the first moment of acceptance. Alison must have felt this, for a slight cloud shadowed his forehead.

"This is a hard condition, Jane! You will permit me to delay my departure, and remain by your side, if, as I fear, the inevitable stroke is close at hand?"

She shook her head. "I thank

you, but I need no support. What is before me"—here for the first time during the interview the young girl's lips quivered—"I shall know how to bear, and I can bear it best alone. I would not have you delay your departure one hour, or hasten your return one week. In a year we shall meet again; until then my promise must content you, as yours does me."

She had risen, and now stood opposite him, with an air of such full determination that Alison at once saw the impossibility of opposing her will; he saw that indeed she needed no support, and he yielded unresistingly to the necessity imposed upon him.

"I will prove to you, Jane, that I know how to honor your wishes, even though it is difficult for me to do so. But if I may claim none of the rights of your betrothed husband, you at least will not deny me the first, and for the present, the only boon I ask."

Jane did not answer, but she made no resistance as Alison took her in his arms, and kissed her lips. There was again an impassioned gleam in his eyes, and for a moment he pressed her close to his heart; but as more ardently, more warmly, he sought to repeat the caress, she broke from him with a sudden movement.

"Enough Henry! We make parting unnecessarily difficult. In a

year you will find your bride; until then—silence."

He stepped back somewhat offended at this hasty repulsion, and his features again assumed the cold, proud expression, which had not left hers for a moment. Mr. Alison evidently was not the man to beg for caresses which were not freely granted him.

An approaching step in the ante-room demanded that both should immediately resume their company manners; the young lady as before, sat in the arm chair, and Alison opposite her, when the person who had thus announced his coming, entered the parlor. He was a small, elderly man with gray hair and sharp, penetrating eyes from which gleamed an inconcealable irony, as he saw the young couple sitting there so much like strangers.

"The physician is about to drive away, Miss Jane. You wished to speak with him," he said.

Jane rose hastily. "Excuse me, Mr. Alison, I must go to my father. I will tell him of your visit, this evening."

She reached him her hand. A significant pressure, a glance of deep, calm, mutual understanding, then they parted with a hasty adieu, and Jane left the room.

As the door of the ante-room closed behind her, the last comer stepped up to Alison, and laid a hand upon his shoulder,

"I congratulate you!"

The young man turned quickly around. "For what?" he asked sharply.

"For your betrothal."

Alison frowned. "It appears, Mr. Atkins, that you have chosen to play the spy."

Atkins took this reproach very unconcernedly.

"Possibly! But you ought to know, Henry, that I do not belong to those disinterested persons from whom the affair is to be kept secret."

The young man's forehead cleared somewhat. "You certainly are an exception, and so—"

"And so, you accept my congratulations without further hesitation," added Atkins. "But you two got through the affair quickly enough. 'Will you have me? I will have you,'—all right. 'The wedding shall be a year from now!'—all short, smooth, clear, without much eloquence or sentimentalism, quite to Miss Jane's taste. But our deceased Mrs. Forest would have thought quite differently of such a betrothal."

Alison's lips curled in scorn. "If Miss Alison had resembled her mother, I should scarcely have sought her hand," he said.

"There you are right!" replied Atkins dryly. "She was not to my taste either, always ill, always inclined to tears and scenes, full of sentimentality and extravagances,

—a real German woman, she died of homesickness at last. Happily the daughter has inherited none of this nonsense. She is just like her father."

"I know it! And no one will accuse Mr. Forest of an excess of sentimentality."

"No!" said Atkins gravely, "and yet it seems to me that he too, once possessed his proper share of such emotions; but fortunately, he was sensible enough to leave all sentiment and whatever else could not be of use to him here, over yonder. When Mr. Forest landed here twenty years ago, sentimentality would have been sadly out of place, for he brought with him a very healthy hatred against Germany and all connected with it. With a sort of morose energy, he flung from him every remembrance of the fatherland, and even Americanized his name—it was Forster there, you know—and when our colony grew, and the German settlers naturally clung together, he kept aloof from them and fraternized with the Americans. But this his wife could not endure; she could not accustom herself to the new life; there were endless quarrels and hard feelings between them, and as the child grew up, matters became still worse. The father wanted to educate her as an American, and he carried his point, as Miss Jane very soon most decidedly placed her—

self on his side. This quite broke the mother's heart. We had scenes enough, I tell you; there was no peace until Mrs. Forest died of homesickness at last. As things now stand, I fear the husband will not long survive her."

The voice of the speaker, at these last words, had involuntarily changed from a mocking to a serious tone; Alison, who had listened in silence, now took his hat from the table.

"You have heard all; I am not to delay my departure; in fact, urgent business calls me to New York. If the event happens, which we must soon expect, stand by Miss Forest's side. But if"—here Alison busied himself with buttoning his gloves—"if there should be difficulties in relation to the arrangement of the property, my father will stand ready to aid you to the full influence of his business knowledge and connections. It would seem especially desirable that the interests of his future daughter should not remain foreign to him, as my journey will prevent my becoming acquainted with them."

The old irony again gleamed from Atkins' eyes, as he sarcastically replied; "I thank you kindly for the proposal, but the property remains by testament in my hands, and consequently all will be found in perfect order. You and your father must wait patiently for a

year until Miss Jane herself brings her dowry into your house. Meantime, I can give you this one satisfaction; Mr. Forest is very rich; richer indeed than generally supposed, of this the glance you desire into our business affairs would at once convince you."

Alison made a passionate gesture. "Mr. Atkins, you are sometimes most horribly inconsiderate," he said.

"Why so?" asked Atkins phlegmatically. "Do you mean this as a reproach? Or do you suppose I could seriously think you would commit the folly of marrying a young lady without fortune, now, when the immense development of your business house and the relations you will establish in Europe make capital doubly necessary to you? No, Henry, I cherish too high an opinion of you to think you capable of any such unpractical romance."

Alison turned and looked searchingly into Atkins face, "I have certainly, as partner and future chief of our house, been circumspect even in my choice of a wife, but I give you my word that if Miss Forest's fortune falls far short of my expectations, I still prefer her to any richer heiress."

Atkins laughed. "I believe that of you without oath, Henry! You are a great deal in love, and I wonder whether you will inspire a

like sentiment in our beautiful, cold Miss Forest. Well, that will happen in time; in any event it is fortunate if the merchant and the lover do not come in conflict, and here each is quite sufficient to itself. Once more I congratulate you!"

After leaving these two, Jane had hastily passed through several rooms, and now entered a half-darkened, but richly and tastefully furnished sleeping-chamber. Gliding softly over the carpet, she approached the bed, and flung back its heavy curtains.

Now it was evident whence the young girl derived that strange expression of face which made her so unlike other girls of her own age, intense seriousness, cool determination, energetic pride; all these, unobliterated, unsoftened by the traces of illness, were repeated in the face of the man who lay here upon the pillow. He slowly turned his head towards the daughter who bent over him, saying:—

"They have just told me of the physician's visit. He was alone with you, and I wished to be present. Was this your command, my father?"

"Yes, my child! I wanted to hear an opinion from him which it would have been difficult to give freely in your presence. I now know that I have but a few days to live."

Jane had sunk on her knees

at the bedside, and pressed her head into the pillows. She did not answer, but her whole form shook with the tearless sobs she energetically suppressed. The sick man gazed down upon her.

"Be calm, Jane, this opinion can surprise you as little as it does me, although we have both, perhaps, expected a longer respite. It must be, and you will not make the necessity of the separation more bitter through your tears."

"No!" She suddenly drew herself up, and gazed down upon her father; her sorrow was suppressed by the most absolute self-mastery; her lips scarce quivered. The sick man smiled, but there lay a sort of bitterness in that smile; perhaps he would rather have seen her not obey him so readily.

"I have to speak with you, my child, and I do not know how many quiet, painless hours may be granted me. Come nearer to me, and listen."

Jane took her place by her father's bedside, and waited silently.

"I can calmly leave you, for I know that despite your youth, you need no stay and no guardian. In outward emergencies, you have Atkins at your side; his sarcastic, eternally mocking nature has never been agreeable to me; but in an association of almost twenty years, I have proved his integrity and devotion. You know that he long

since amassed a fortune of his own, but he preferred to let it remain in our house. He will be at your side, until you confide yourself to the protection of a husband, which will perhaps happen soon."

"Father," interrupted Jane, "I have something to tell you. You know that Mr. Alison has been here; he has asked for my hand."

The sick man drew himself up with an expression of lively interest.

"And you?"

"I have given him my promise."

"Ah?" Forest sank back upon his pillow, and was silent.

Jane bent over him in astonishment. "And are you not willing? I felt certain of your consent in advance."

"You know Jane, that I will neither restrict nor control you in your choice of a husband. It is your own future for which you have to decide, and I am convinced that you have not decided without serious deliberation."

"No; the proposal did not come unexpectedly to me. I have implicit confidence in Mr. Alison's character, and in his future; his family is one of the first in our city, his position is brilliant, and I am certain that his mercantile genius will in after years secure him an important place in the business world. Does this not appear sufficient to you, my father?"

"To me? certainly, if it is enough for you!"

With an expression of surprise, Jane fixed her dark eyes upon her father. "What more could be demanded from a marriage?" Forest again smiled with the same bitterness as before.

"You are right, Jane, quite right! I was only thinking of my own wooing, and of your mother's promise. But it is just as well. Mr. Alison indeed possesses all the advantages you have named, and in these respect you are more than his equal; you will be very content with each other."

"I hope so!" said Jane, and now began to tell her father the conditions she had imposed upon her betrothed, and the delay upon which she had insisted. Forest listened with eager attention.

"I like that! Without knowing it you met my wishes in this decision, for I, too, have a condition to impose upon you. What would you say if I demanded that you should pass this year of freedom in Germany with our relatives?"

With a movement of the most painful surprise, the young girl rose from her chair.—"In Germany? I?"

"Yes, do you not love Germany?"

"No," replied Jane coldly, "as little as you, my father. I do not love the country that blighted your

youth, embittered your life, and at last thrust you out like a malefactor. I could not forgive my mother, that with a consciousness of all you had suffered there, she always clung to the fatherland, and made you and herself inexpressibly unhappy with that incurable home-sickness."

"Be silent, Jane!" interrupted Forest passionately. "There are things which you do not understand, will never learn to understand! I met no consideration in your mother, that I confess; she indeed made me unhappy; and still, she gave me hours of happiness, such as you will never give your husband—*never*, Jane! But then Mr. Alison will have no need of them."

Jane was silent. She had become accustomed to find her father very irritable in his sickness, sometimes quite incomprehensible. With the consideration one gives the sick, she now bore this passionate outbreak, and quietly resumed her place at his bedside.

A few minutes after, Forest again turned to her. "Forgive me, child!" he said mildly, "I was unjust. You have become what I educated you to be, what I would have you be, and I do not now regret having given you this direction. You will better endure the life-conflict than your weak, sensitive mother. Let this rest; it was

something different you were to hear from me. Do you know that you have a brother?"

Jane started up in terror, and in questioning expectation, fixed her eyes upon her father.

"As a child I sometimes heard a hint of this; but lately no one has ever spoken of him to me. Is he dead?"

A deep sigh rent Forest's breast. "Perhaps he is dead, perhaps not. We have never been able to learn with certainty. I at last forbade all mention of his name, because his remembrance threatened to kill your mother; but the silence was of little avail; she never forgot him for a single hour."

With eager intentness Jane bent down yet closer to her father. He took her hand and held it fast in his.

"You are not unacquainted with the recent history of your native country, my daughter; you are aware of the glowing enthusiasm which in the thirtieth year of the present century took possession of all Germany, and especially of its high schools. I was a student at that time, and, a youth of eighteen years, I was animated like so many of my comrades with visions of the freedom and greatness that might come to my fatherland under a new and more liberal order of things. We sought to carry out these revolutionary ideas, and for that crime

the government repaid us with imprisonment, in many cases with sentence of death. I was doomed to die, but by especial favor, my sentence was commuted to thirty years' imprisonment. Seven of these years I endured; but as you have often enough heard the story, I will not repeat it now. Even these bitter years resulted in good to me; they ended for all time my youthful ideals and youthful illusions. When the amnesty at last came, under the iron pressure of the prison, in endless humiliations, in glowing hatred, had been ripened a man, who better than the twenty years' old dreamer knew how to bravely assume and patiently endure the struggle with life and misery."

Forest was silent for a moment, but the hard, savage bitterness which now lay in his features, and which was even more grimly reflected in Jane's face, showed that these remembrances were not foreign to her, and that the daughter had always been her father's confidant.

After a short pause the father continued: "Scarce was I free, when I committed the folly of marrying. It was madness in my position, but already, while at the university, I had become betrothed to your mother. She had waited long years for me, for my sake had renounced a brilliant position in life,

and she now stood alone and forsaken, an orphan, dependent upon the favor and cold charity of *relatives*. This I could not bear; rather would I venture all. We were married, and a year after, your brother was born. He was not like you, Jane."—As he said these words, a lingering, almost painful glance swept the beautiful face of his daughter. "He was blonde and blue-eyed like his mother, but his possession was not unalloyed happiness to me. The first eight years of my marriage were the darkest of my life; more terrible, even, than those days in prison. There I suffered alone; here it was with wife and child that I must endure the conflict against misery and utter destitution which with all its horrors threatened them. My career was naturally ruined, my connections severed. Whatever I began, whatever I undertook, to the demagogue every door was closed; every means of support withdrawn. At that time I put forth my best strength, and did my utmost in a struggle for daily bread; and still, my most unremitting efforts did not always suffice to keep my family from want.

"We might perhaps have perished, but the year 1848 came, and showed that the old dreamer had not yet fully learned to renounce his ideals. He allowed himself

again to be enticed ; for the second time, he listened to the syren's song, only to be dashed anew against the rocks.—I took my wife and child to a secure place among relatives, and threw myself headlong into the tide of revolution. You know how it ended ! Our parliament was dissolved, the conflict in Baden broke out. I was one of the leaders of the revolutionary army ; we were beaten, annihilated. For the first time a propitious destiny protected me from the worst. Now I was free.

“I would not again, and this time perhaps forever, be shut up in prison ; I would not give up my family to irretrievable ruin ; therefore I decided upon flight to America. My brother-in-law offered me the necessary passage-money ; perhaps from kindness of heart, but more probably it was to be rid of the accursed demagogue, the disgrace of the family. Great circumspection was needed, for from one end of Germany to the other, the minions of the law were already let loose upon our track.

“In disguise, and under an assumed name, I reached Hamburg, where my wife and children were awaiting me. You had been born during these last months. Poor child ! It was in an evil hour I first pressed you to my heart. With the first kiss of your father, tears of glowing hatred, of bitter despair

fell upon your infant face. I fear they have thrown a shadow over your life ; I have never seen you carelessly merry like other children.

“On our way to the ship we separated so as not to attract attention. Your mother carried you in her arms, I followed at some distance, leading my boy by the hand. When half way up the ship's stairs, I recognized a face of evil omen. It was that of a spy. I knew him, he knew me ; if he saw me, I was lost. Hastily forming my decision, I told the boy to follow his mother ; he was old enough to understand, and she stood there in sight. I flung myself into the thickest of the throng at the harbor. An hour later, the spy had vanished, and I reached the ship unremarked. My wife, who had been prepared for possible delay on my part, hastened to meet me ; her first inquiry was for the child. After a few words of terrible import, we understood the situation. He had not joined his mother ; he must be on shore. In mortal apprehension, I rushed back regardless of the imminent danger to myself. I searched the whole harbor up and down, asking tidings of my boy of all I met. No one had seen him ; none could give me information.

“The signal for departure was given. If I remained on shore I was lost, and my wife and child

would sail, forsaken and friendless, on the wide ocean to a strange continent. The choice was a fearful one, but I was forced to make it. When I trod the ship's deck without my child; when I saw receding from me the shores where he was left alone, a prey to every danger,—that moment—when I broke loose from home and country forever, the persecutions and bitter-nesses of a whole lifetime all came back; that moment set the seal to our separation, and darkened every remembrance of the past to me.

“The first hour of our landing in New York, I wrote to my wife's brother; but weeks passed before he received my letter. Doctor Stephen, my brother-in-law, pursued the search with the warmest ardor and the fullest sympathy. He went to Hamburg himself, he did everything in his power; but it was all in vain. He did not find the slightest trace of your brother. The boy had vanished utterly; he remains so to this day.”

Forest was silent. His breathing became difficult, but Jane bending forward, eager and intent, had not thought of preventing an excitement which might prove dangerous, perhaps fatal to him; such regardful tenderness did not lie in the relations between this father and daughter. She had a secret to hear, a last legacy to receive, and if he died in the effort, he must

speaking the words necessity demanded, and she must listen. After a short space for rest he began anew:

“With this last sacrifice, the evil fates that had pursued me were propitiated, our misfortunes ended. Success attended me from the first step I took on American soil. In New York, I met Atkins, who was there gaining a precarious livelihood from a secretaryship. He rescued me and my little all from a band of swindlers who already had me, the inexperienced foreigner, half in their net. Out of gratitude, I proposed that he should accompany me to the West. He had nothing to lose, and came with me to this place, then a vast, unpeopled solitude. Our plough was first to break up the prairie sod; the board cabin we reared with our own hands was the first dwelling erected here. Perhaps you remember when, in your earliest childhood, your father himself went out to the field with scythe or spade, while your mother did the work of a maid-servant in the house. But this did not last long.

“Our settlement made rapid strides. The soil, the location, were in the highest degree favorable; a town arose, a levee was built—lands which I had bought for a song rose to a hundred-fold their original value. Undertakings, to which I pledged myself with others, had an undreamed-of success. Participa-

tion in public life, and the position for which I had once so ardently longed, with social importance and consideration past my most sanguine hopes, became mine ; and now, my daughter, I leave you in a position and in pecuniary circumstances, which make even our exclusive Mr. Alison consider it an honor to win your hand."

"I know it, my father!" The self-importance of Jane's manner at this moment was more noticeable even than before ; but it did not seem like her usual haughtiness ; her pride was evidently rooted in the consciousness of being her father's daughter.

With an effort so violent as to show that his strength was failing, Forest hastened to the end of his recital :

"I need not tell you, Jane, that I have never abandoned the search for your brother ; that I have renewed it again and again, and that since means have been at my command, I have spared no outlay of money or of effort. The result has been only disappointment. Latterly, I have lost hope, and have found solace in you ; but your mother's anguish at the loss of her child, was never assuaged. To the hour of her death, she clung to the hope that he was living, that he would sometime appear. This hope I had long since relinquished, and yet upon her death-bed she exacted

from me a promise to go myself to Europe and make one last search in person. I promised this, as the last amnesty had lifted the bar which had hitherto prevented my visiting my native land ; and I was just making preparations for a long absence, when illness prostrated me. But the last, ardent wish of your mother ought not to remain unfulfilled. Not that I have the slightest hope that a trace, which for twenty long years has eluded the most vigilant search, can now be found.

"You are simply to fulfil a pious duty in keeping the promise I have no power to keep ; you are to go through a form to assure yourself, before my entire fortune falls into your hands, that you are in reality the only heir ; and for these reasons solely, I send you to the Rhine. In the business steps to be taken, your uncle will stand at your side ; you are only to add to your proceedings, that energy of which he is incapable. It will not appear strange to our social circle if you pass the year of mourning for your father among his relatives, in his former home. If Alison wishes, at the end of his European travels, he can receive your hand there, and return with you ; but I leave this matter to you alone. I place only one duty in your hands, Jane ; you will fulfil it."

Jane arose and stood erect be-

fore her father with all her energies aroused for action.

"If a trace of my brother is to be found, I shall find it, father! I shall yield only to impossibilities; I give you my hand upon that!"

Forest clasped her hand in his, and now the peculiar gravity of the relation between this father and daughter was evident, there were no kisses, no caresses, a pressure of the hand as among men, sealed the given and the accepted promise. For a few moments deep silence reigned; then the dying man said suddenly and in a subdued voice :

"And now, draw back the curtains; I can no longer endure the darkness. Let in the light."

She obeyed. She drew back the heavy, green damask curtain, and through a large corner window, streamed into the room the full dazzling glow of the midday sun. The dying man raised himself upright, and gazed intently out upon the broad prospect offered to his view. There lay the city, with its streets and squares, its sea of houses, the river-landing with its boats; there lay the lordly Mississippi dotted with its fairy isles, among which glided in and out the countless skiffs and steamers. Scattered near and far, were suburban homes surrounded by broad cultivated acres, and smiling in peace and plenty, while away to the

horizon's utmost verge stretched the illimitable prairies, green, billowy seas of verdure, relieved here and there by groves of oak and stretches of uplands.

Forest fixed his glance upon the magnificent panorama. Perhaps he was thinking of the time, when no human foot-fall had profaned this primeval solitude, when poor and friendless, he had come here to wrest from nature her as yet unappropriated wealth; perhaps he was gazing with pride upon the city which owed its birth and expansion to him; perhaps he was sad at the thought of leaving all this beauty and grandeur and prosperity. Convulsed with emotion, he sank back on his pillow. Jane bent anxiously over him. But this was no sudden access of bodily illness, no regretful feeling for the new home and the new-found riches he was to leave for ever. It was a sudden, overmastering feeling long repressed, which now compelled utterance.

"When you arrive in Germany, my daughter, greet the old home and the old home-river for me! Do you hear, Jane? Salute Germany for me! Salute our Rhine!"

The words came painfully subdued, almost inaudible from his lips. Jane gazed at him in mingled surprise and terror.

"Have you then loved Germany

so much, father? You have almost taught me to hate it."

Forest was silent for a brief space; his lips quivered, and tears, seemingly wrung from a terrible inward conflict, rolled down his cheeks.

"The home-land had only misery for me," he said in a voice trembling with emotion. "It persecuted, degraded me, cast me out; it denied even bread to me and mine. America gave me freedom, gave me riches and honor; and now, Jane, I would renounce them all—all, could I only die upon the Rhine!"

There lay such harrowing anguish in this final utterance of a long repressed sorrow, that Jane recoiled in terror before it. This fatal homesickness! Her mother, the sensitive, delicate woman, after long years of suffering, had died of it at last; and her father, that proud, energetic man who had so entirely broken away from home and its remembrances, who had united heart and soul with the land of his adoption, and had seemed petrified into hatred against his fatherland, he too had buried this agonized longing deep in his heart, only to acknowledge it in his dying hour!

Jane stood dumb and bewildered before this discovery, but she felt that here, just here, that strange something lay, which, despite all misunderstanding, had yet made her

father and mother one; which must keep her eternally remote from both. She gazed intently at her father, he now lay quiet, with closed eyes and compressed lips. She knew that in such moments as this she must not disturb him. Softly gliding to the window, she let down the curtain, and the usual subdued twilight again ruled in the sick chamber.

CHAPTER II.

A STRANGE CAVALIER.

"WELL, Miss Jane, a most promising introduction this much praised Rhine gives us, to that fatherland of yours! In six-and-thirty hours, I have become mortally weary of the whole country. We landed in such a fog that we couldn't see the shore until we set foot on it; that day we passed in Hamburg there was such a rain that I really thought a second deluge had broken out, and here upon the Rhine, we find a pretty state of things, don't we? I cannot understand how you remain so calm through it all!"

It was indeed no enviable situation, this, which so aroused Mr. Atkins' ire. In a dense fog, in the midst of a drizzling but incessant rain, the heavy post-chaise lay half upset in the middle of the suburban road. The horses already loosed from harness stood near with bowed

heads, as if fully comprehending the unfortunate state of affairs, and in a gully by the road side near the broken hind-wheel, sat the postilion, his head bound up with a handkerchief, and groaning as he held his injured foot in both hands. Jane, who with an air of resignation stood by him, paid no heed to Atkins' complaints. She only gave a slight shrug of her shoulders, and persisted in an obstinate silence.

"We cannot possibly remain here longer in the rain!" continued Atkins in renewed vexation; "You certainly cannot. So far as I can determine, our postilion's injuries are not dangerous, and he declares that B. is only an hour's distance at the furthest. Our best course is to hasten on there and send him the needed help."

"No," interrupted Jane, gently but decidedly. "His wound is still bleeding, and he is liable to faint at any moment. We could not possibly leave him helpless and alone; you at least, must remain with him, while I try to reach the nearest house."

"Alone? In a strange country? In this fog which would be very likely to lead you right into that accursed Rhine, that we hear raging down yonder, without seeing a glimpse of it? No, I shall consent to no such thing."

"I am not at all afraid," declared Jane, with a positiveness

which showed that she did not allow Atkins to have the least influence or control over her movements, "and if I follow the main road it will be impossible for me to lose my way. In any event, it is the only thing that remains for us to do."

"But Miss Jane, consider!—If some human being would only make his appearance!—Hold! there comes some one!—A word with you, Sir, if you will allow it."

These last words, although spoken in German, must, through their strong English accent, have betrayed the foreigner, for a low but musical voice, asked in the purest English; "What is the matter, Sir?"

"God be praised, it is a gentleman; he speaks English!" said Mr. Atkins, with a sigh of relief; and quickly approaching the stranger, who until now had been only half visible through the fog, he continued excitedly:

"We have had a mishap with our carriage. It is broken, the postilion is injured, and we are entire strangers here. May I ask if you would, perhaps, show us the way to B.?"

"Certainly!"

"And I also beg you to send us out the first carriage you can find. And one thing more! You will, perhaps, have the kindness to take

a young lady to B. under your protection."

The stranger, who had bowed a polite assent to the first request, at the last stepped back, and there was something like a tone of horror in his voice as he replied.

"A young lady—am I—"

"You are to conduct her to the city and to the house which she designates to you. Miss Jane, may I implore you to confide yourself to this gentleman's care? You cannot possibly stand here longer in the rain."

Jane, who had taken no part in the conversation, now turned to the stranger. She glanced at his pale, delicate face, into a pair of blue, dreamy eyes which at this moment had an expression of mingled terror and embarrassment.

"I am exceedingly obliged to you," said Mr. Atkins, without waiting in the least for the gentleman's assent. "And now may I beg you to hasten, for the young lady's sake as well as my own? Good-by, Miss Jane. Have no anxiety in regard to the injured man; he remains in my care. I hope to meet you soon in a dryer atmosphere."

All these arrangements had been made so hastily, with such dictatorial politeness, and in such an incontrovertible tone of command, that no evasion seemed possible. The stranger made no effort at

resistance; in dumb consternation, he allowed all this to pass over him, and followed mechanically the directions given him. With a silent bow, he asked the young lady to accompany him; the next moment they were already on the way, and a winding in the road hid them from the eyes of Atkins and the coachman.

Whether the stranger was more surprised at the free, American manner in which the lady confided herself to the care of the first man she had met upon the highway, or frightened at the duty of gallantry imposed upon him, was difficult to decide. But his embarrassment was evident, and kept him from all attempts at conversation. Miss Forest did not understand this strange behavior. She was accustomed everywhere to be an object of great attention, and now this man, in appearance and language a gentleman, showed himself so little susceptible to the honor of accompanying a lady, that he did not even deem it worth his while to address a word to her. Jane measured her companion with a glance of anger, compressed her lips, and decided not to speak a word to him during the entire way.

For almost ten minutes they had walked on in silence, side by side, when the gentleman suddenly paused, and in the same low, musical voice as before, said; "The highway makes a broad winding here.

May I conduct you by the nearer path in which I am wont to go?"

"I have confided myself to your guidance," answered Jane, shortly and coldly, and with another silent bow, he turned from the public road and took a path to the left.

The designated path might certainly be nearer, and for a man passable in a case of necessity; but it was not at all suitable for a lady. It led over a swampy soil; through wet meadows, through dripping hedges, through fields and bushes, not only to the injury, but to the ruin of Jane's elegant mourning clothes, which had been designed for travelling, but for travelling in an extra post-chaise. The light cloak was as slight a protection as the thin boots; her dress became wet through and through, while her companion, enveloped in a thick woollen plaid, scarce felt any inconvenience from the weather, and did not think to offer her its protection. But he seemed to take very literally Mr. Atkins' injunction to hasten, for he hurried on in such strides that Jane could keep up with him only through the greatest effort.

Any other woman would have declared that such a path and such a pace were beyond her strength. But Miss Forest had determined to reach the town as soon as possible so as to send aid to those she had left behind, and lamentation and

delay were not her business. She therefore, more and more resolutely, drew her shoes from the mud which seemed inclined to hold them fast, set her feet energetically into the tall, moist grass, and kept tearing her veil loose from the hedges to which it caught. But her manner grew more and more morose, and after a quarter of an hour passed in this way, she halted suddenly.

"I must beg you to wait. I need a moment's rest."

These words, spoken in the sharpest tone, seemed to awaken in her companion a sense of his thoughtlessness. He paused, and gazed in terror upon his protégée, who, exhausted and quite breathless, stood at the edge of a dense hedge of willows.

"I beg your pardon, Miss; I had quite forgotten—I" — he paused, and then added apologetically "I really am not accustomed to association with ladies."

Jane bowed as if she would say: "I have learned that!"

The gentleman now, for the first time, seemed to be aware of the state of the young lady's toilet. "Good heavens, you are quite wet through!" he cried anxiously, and then glancing upward, he added in evident bewilderment: "I believe it rains!"

"I *believe* so!" said Jane, with an irony which happily escaped the stranger; for he gazed searchingly

around. They were both standing by the willow-hedge, which rising from a wall of earth, after a rain of several hours, offered no especially inviting resting place; and yet, the gentleman seemed to regard it as such. With a hasty movement, he tore the plaid from his shoulders, spread it carefully on the wet ground, and with a gesture of the hand, invited his companion to take her seat upon it.

Jane remained standing, and looked up to him. It really surpassed all comprehension. For a whole half hour this man, with the most indifferent air in the world, had seen her getting soaked through and through, and now unhesitatingly, just to afford her a resting place for two minutes, he threw into the mud the shawl which might all this while have protected her. Anything more laughable or unpracticable had never before met her observation, and still, in this proceeding there lay such painful anxiety, so timid an apology for former thoughtlessness, that Jane almost involuntarily accepted the invitation, and hesitatingly sat down.

For the first time, she now gazed attentively at her companion, who stood close to her. As if heated by the rapid walk, he had thrown off his hat, and stroked the rain-soaked hair from his high forehead. He had noble, delicate features,

intellectual in the highest degree; but a transparent, sickly pallor lay upon them, and the large, blue eyes, with their strange, dreamy expression, looked as if they had nothing at all to do with the world and the present; as if they were gazing far out into the illimitable distance. This young lady, with the cold, beautiful features, and the proud, energetic glance, with an interest peculiar and almost indefinable to herself, gazed into the face so infinitely unlike her own.

Over all brooded the fog, and wove its gray veil around the trees and shrubs, which, dim and shadowy, gleamed through it; softly pattered down the rain, the first mild spring rain, which appeared to revive the whole earth with its warm, aromatic breath; lightly murmured through the air those strange voices, those whisperings and echoes peculiar to the rainy landscape, and amid these mist-voices, far away and mysterious, toned the ebbing and flowing of the still invisible river.

The whole situation had something strange, something oppressive, and Jane, to whom these emotions were entirely new, suddenly broke loose from their spell.

"Is that the river, down yonder?" she asked pointing out into the fog.

"The Rhine! We are on its banks."

Again there was a pause. Miss Forest impatiently broke a twig from the willow-hedge, for a moment gazed absently at the opening buds, from which the first green was just bursting forth, and then carelessly threw it on the ground. Her companion bent, and lifted up the twig; she glanced at him in surprise.

"They are the first spring buds," he said softly. "I would not see them perish in the mud."

Jane's lips curled mockingly. How sentimental! But, indeed, she was now in Germany! Annoyed and almost angry at this indirect reproach, the young lady rose suddenly, and declared herself quite rested.

The gentleman was ready to go at once. Jane threw a hasty glance upon the plaid still lying in the mud, but as he seemed to have quite forgotten it, she did not think it worth her while to remind him of it. They walked on silent as before, but the guide now moderated his steps, and often looked anxiously around to see if she could follow. Another quarter of an hour had passed, when the outlines of houses and turrets loomed up through the fog, and the stranger turned to his companion.

"We are in B. May I ask Miss, where I shall conduct you?"

"To the house of Dr. Stephen."

He paused in surprise. "Doctor Stephen?"

"Yes! do you know him?"

"Certainly. I live in his house, and indeed"—he passed his hand thoughtfully over his forehead—"I faintly remember having heard that some one was expected there, a young relative, I believe."

"I was certainly expected," said Jane impatiently, "and you will oblige me if you would shorten the waiting of my relatives as much as possible."

"I am at your command, Miss! May I beg you to turn to the right so that I can conduct you through the garden by the shortest path?"

Jane followed, but she soon found reason enough to execrate this shortest path; for the hedge-way leading through the garden was worse than the deep mud and difficulties of the path they had just gone over. Her companion appeared to realize this himself, for after a while he paused suddenly, and said in evident embarrassment:—

"I forgot that the path was not suitable for a lady. Shall we turn around?"

"I think we are already half through it," answered Jane in a somewhat exasperated tone. "The end cannot be far distant."

"It is there behind the latticed gate."

"Well, then, let us go forward."

They had advanced a hundred steps or more, when a new obstacle loomed up. The deepest portions of the path were quite overflowed by the rain, which here formed a real lake, that, enclosing the whole breadth of the passage, was not to be avoided. The unhappy guide halted in utter confusion.

"You cannot possibly pass through here," he said anxiously.

"I will try!" answered Jane resignedly, and placed the tip of her foot in the water; but he excitedly held her back.

"Impossible! The water is a foot deep. If you only—if you would allow me to carry you over."

The question was very timidly uttered, and with a half sympathetic, half derisive glance, Jane's eyes swept the tall but very slender and delicate form with its bowed shoulders.

"I thank you!" she returned with unconcealed irony. "The burden might be too heavy for you."

The irony had a peculiar effect upon the hitherto timid stranger. A scarlet flush suddenly shot over the pale face; with a single effort, he drew himself up, lifted the young lady in his arms, and rushed with her into the midst of the water. All this passed so suddenly, that Jane, surprised and confounded, had no time for resistance, but

now she made a hasty movement, resolved to wade through the deep water, rather than permit a liberty taken without her consent. All at once, she met his eyes. Was it the dumb, almost plaintive entreaty that lay in them, or was there something quite other—something strange in this glance? Jane's eyes fell slowly, the former oppressive feeling returned with redoubled might, and she remained motionless, while with a strength none would have dreamed that those arms possessed, he carried her all the way over.

"I beg your pardon," he said in a low voice, as, timidly and respectfully, he set down his burden at the garden gate.

"I thank you," replied Jane, curtly and coldly, as she herself thrust open the gate, and entered.

She had only taken a few steps in the garden, when a tall, almost gigantic, figure loomed up before her.

"Herr Professor, in Heaven's name, what tempted you to go out in such weather," he said. "And without an umbrella too! You may have taken a cold, a fever, your death—and the plaid! Herr Professor, where then have you left your plaid?"

Vexed and almost offended, the professor turned away from the anxious servant, who, armed with an immense umbrella, sought to

protect him in such an obtrusive way.

"But Frederic! Do you not see the lady?" He pointed to Jane whom in his great excitement Frederic had not remarked. This new event, the appearance of a lady by his master's side, seemed to entirely transcend the servant's powers of comprehension; he let the umbrella fall, and stared at both with wide-open mouth, and in such boundless astonishment that it was very evident such a thing had never happened before.

The professor made a hasty end to his speechless consternation. "It is the young lady who was expected at Doctor Stephen's," he said. "Go, now, and tell the doctor—"

He had time to say no more; for scarce had Frederic caught the first words, when, with an unintelligible exclamation, he turned suddenly, and shot away in mighty strides. Jane remained motionless, gazing at the professor; her manner plainly betrayed what she began to think of her German countrymen, and after this meeting with these two first specimens, she began to have serious doubts as to their sanity. The master as well as the servant was ridiculous in her eyes.

Meantime, in the house, Frederic's cry of announcement had caused a positive uproar. Doors were opened and shut violently,

stairs creaked under light and heavy footfalls; they seemed to be in eager haste to improvise some new reception ceremonies, or to place in order those already begun; and when, at last, Jane, accompanied by the professor, approached the front door, a new surprise awaited her. Rich garlands of flowers surrounded doors and pillars, a giant "*Welcome*" was displayed over the former; flowers were strewn upon floors and stairways, and at the foot of the staircase stood the tall Frederic, with an immense bouquet in his hand, which, with a proud smile on his broad face, he held in rather an awkward manner, right before the young girl's nose.

Such a reception was evidently not to Miss Forest's taste. In her father's house, all such superfluous sentimentality had been suppressed in the same measure as all undue familiarity with servants had been avoided. Jane's brows contracted, she scanned the servant from head to foot, and as he, abashed at this ungracious stare, stepped to one side, with a haughty wave of the hand in which there lay small thanks, but a great deal of cold repulsion, she swept past him up the stairs, without deigning a glance at the festal adornments in her honor, and arrived at their head, where Doctor Stephen and his wife stood to meet her.

The professor, as if spell-bound,

stood below, and gazed at her through the door, which remained open for a moment. He saw how the young lady at this very peculiar first meeting with her relatives, before whom she appeared unexpectedly, drenched with rain, through the garden gate and in the company of an entire stranger, did not for a moment lose her self-possession. She stepped up to her uncle, with cool politeness, reached him her hand, and with exactly the same expression, offered her cheek to be kissed by her aunt. She then drew herself up, and stood before them both, resolute, majestic, and self-conscious, as if at that very first moment of meeting, she would protest against any future guardianship or dictation from them.

The door closed, and as if awakening from a dream, the professor started up, and glanced around at Frederic. The poor fellow still stood at the foot of the stairs; the flowers had fallen from his hands, and he stared motionless after the proud, beautiful apparition, that had so rudely repelled him. His master laid a hand upon his shoulder,

"Come up with me, Frederic?"

At these words, some life entered the poor fellow's face, which gradually assumed an expression of deep mortification. He passed his hand through his ash-blond hair, and with his clear blue eyes, in

which stood some tears, he gazed at his master.

"But what have I done so much out of the way?" he asked in a pathetic tone.

"Never mind, Frederic," said the professor kindly. "The young lady is evidently not acquainted with our German manners of reception. Come, now!"

Frederic obeyed. He bent down and picked up his bouquet, but at sight of it, the former mortification seemed to give place to resentment. With an expression of rage, he hurled the bouquet far out into the garden.

"Frederic!" The exclamation and the grave tone of his master brought the servant at once to reflection.

"I am coming, Herr Professor!" he replied humbly, and wiping away the tears with his hand, with bowed head, he softly followed his master up the stairs.

* * *

More than six weeks had already passed since the arrival of the young American, and she still remained a stranger in the house of her relatives. It was not their fault; they had from the first treated her with the warmest cordiality. Doctor Stephen and his wife belonged to those good, harmless people, whose highest endeavor it is to live in peace with all the world, and not to allow themselves to be

disturbed in the even tenor of their way. The deceased Forest had judged his brother-in-law righteously, when he declared that he had defrayed the expenses of himself and wife and children to America, partly out of a good heart, but in a great measure, to be rid of the demagogue, who threatened to bring his otherwise loyal family into constant annoyance and suspicion.

The doctor had very much regretted that his sister's destiny was united to that of this unfortunate man, who in his pride and obstinacy, would let his family starve rather than accept the slightest assistance from relatives; and he had been most firm in his conviction, that this dreamy, eccentric radical would go to ruin in matter-of-fact America. It had happened otherwise, and here, as elsewhere, success had won its homage. Although Doctor Stephen and his wife had once anxiously shunned all mention of their Forest relatives, they had of late years, gladly and often, spoken of their brother-in-law, the millionaire across the ocean, and the prospective visit of his daughter had thrown them into no small excitement. If the orphan niece had come to them poor and helpless, she would have been greeted with open arms; but the young heiress was received with the most profound respect, and this was what Jane especially demanded. From

the first, she resisted every attempt at outside control, and the relatives soon found that they must in no way interfere with the young lady's independence.

In consideration of her wealth, they could cheerfully have forgiven every whim and every fault; but they could not forgive this persistent coldness and reticence, through which no beam of warmth ever penetrated, and which made confidence impossible as disagreement. Never, by word or glance, did Jane betray the slightest dissatisfaction with the house in which she was a guest. But the pitying contempt with which this young lady, reared in the bosom of American luxury, yielded to their simple, plebeian way of life, was deeply felt, and wounded none the less. After a few days' acquaintance with their niece, the doctor and his wife came to the conclusion that she was the haughtiest, most heartless creature in the world.

In one respect, Jane did herself wrong; her haughtiness was not founded on the possession of riches or personal advantages; but upon that intellectual superiority through which she ruled all around her, and which she, ere long, began to make evident in a wider circle. Reared in the freedom of American life, she thought the respect here paid to leading personages slavish, the exclusiveness of certain circles

ridiculous, and the interminable titles and ceremonies of German society called forth her bitterest irony. Her relatives, in mortal terror, frequently heard her intrude these opinions in the presence of strangers; but they need have given themselves no uneasiness. Miss Forest was an American and a reputed millionaire, two peculiarities which gave her entire freedom to do and say what would not have been allowed to another; and this so much the more as her betrothal remained a secret. There was scarcely a family of position in the city who did not cherish some hopes of future relationship with this eligible young heiress; and so, upon her entrance into society, Jane found herself courted and flattered, a state of things not at all new to her. All the world was enraptured with her beauty, which was in such striking contrast to the serene, blooming freshness of the Rhine-land maidens; they flattered her pride which so often wounded; they admired the intellect which she hardly thought it worth her while to display in these stupid circles. The young students who, without exception, admired and wondered at this foreign meteor which had made so sudden an appearance among them, left no opportunity unemployed to approach and give expression to their homage. But none succeeded even for a moment,

in penetrating the icy indifference and chill decorum of this young lady. True to the traditions of her father, she had, upon her first arrival in Germany, girt herself about with this icy dignity and haughtiness, almost as with a coat of mail.

Doctor Stephen owned a pretty house in the handsomest part of B. His family occupied only its lower story; the upper was rented to Professor Fernow, who, called to the university almost three years ago, had since had his lodgings here. A scientific work which had made a profound sensation in the learned world, had won for the young man this professorship in B. He had come here, an entire stranger, without recommendations or acquaintances, and attended only by his servant; but at his very first lectures, he had enforced marked attention from his colleagues, and excited the liveliest interest among the students. With this success he had been content; the professor was not a man to assert himself, or claim any especial place in society. He anxiously avoided all intercourse not indispensable to his calling; he made no visits and received none; he shunned all acquaintanceship, declined every invitation, and lived in the solitude of his studies. His delicate health always served him as an excuse. At first the people of B. had been

unwilling to accept this apology, and had sought to ascribe his strange exclusiveness to Heaven knows what mysterious and dangerous motives; but now they were convinced that the professor was the gentlest, most harmless man in the world, whom only his passion for study, combined with his really impaired health, had led into such a way of life.

Several of his colleagues, who had approached nearer to him in the way of official relations, spoke with wondering admiration of his astonishing knowledge and his astonishing modesty, which really shunned all recognition, all emerging from retirement; but from their full hearts they were content with this, for they best knew how dangerous such a man might become to their authority, if, with this fulness of knowledge, was united an obtrusive personality and an energetic character. So, without opposition, they let him go on in his silent way; his learning was esteemed without envy, his lectures were numerous attended; but he played as unimportant a rôle in the university as in society, and lived like a veritable hermit in the midst of B.

Doctor Stephen found no occasion of complaint against his quiet tenant, who brought neither noise nor disturbance into the house; who punctually paid his rent, and

who, when upon rare occasions he became visible, gave a polite greeting but shunned any longer conversation. The doctor was almost the only one who, at the professor's frequent attacks of illness, entered his rooms, or came into any closer relations with him; but the doctor's wife, who would gladly have taken the sick man under her motherly wing, had not succeeded in her efforts, and must content herself with bringing the servant under her domestic sway instead of his master.

Frederic was not gifted with surpassing intelligence nor with especial strength of comprehension; his intellectual abilities were small, but in their stead, Nature had given him a giant body, and replaced his other defects by a boundless good nature and a really touching devotion to his master. But quite in contrast to him, he had a most decided inclination to associate with others, and was delighted to employ for others, the abundant leisure which the professor allowed him; and so he helped the doctor's wife in the house, and the doctor in the garden. In this way he had gradually become a sort of factotum for both, without whose help nothing could be done, and it had been he who, through hours of exertion, and an expenditure of all his powers of invention, had prepared that unsuccessful welcome for the

young American. Since that scene he always avoided her, half-timidly, half-resentfully.

CHAPTER III.

WAS IT SICKNESS OR ———?

JUNE, with its oppressively hot days, was at an end. In Professor Fernow's lodgings it was as silent as a church on a week-day; nothing moved here, not a sound broke the profound stillness that reigned in these apartments. One room was like another; book-case succeeded book-case, and upon each stood volumes in endless rows. The curtains were let down, a dim twilight prevailed. The genius and the science of centuries were heaped together here, but not a single fresh breath of air intruded into this solemn seclusion.

In this study, which differed from the other rooms in nothing but perhaps a still greater mass of books, sat the professor before his writing table, but he was not at work; pen and paper lay unused before him; his head thrown back against the upholstery of his easy chair, his arms crossed, he gazed fixedly at the ceiling. Perhaps it was the green window curtains that made his face appear so strangely pale and ill, but his bearing also expressed an infinite wea-

riiness, as if both mind and body were wrought to their utmost tension, and his eyes betrayed nothing of that intensity of thought—which is perhaps just about to solve some scientific problem; there lay in them only that melancholy, purposeless reverie which so often absorbs the poet, so seldom the man of science.

The door opened, and softly as this had happened, the professor trembled with that susceptibility peculiar to very nervous persons; Doctor Stephen appeared on the threshold, and behind him the anxious, care-worn face of Frederic was visible.

"Good evening," said the doctor entering the room. "I have come to give you another lecture. You are not so well to-day, are you?"

The professor glanced at him in surprise, "You are mistaken, doctor! I find myself quite well. There must be a misunderstanding, I did not send for you?"

"I know that," said the doctor, coolly. "You would not send for me unless it were a matter of life or death, but this Frederic here has declared to me that all is not quite right with you."

"And indeed it is not," said Frederic, who, as he saw the displeased glance of his master, had taken refuge behind the doctor, and placed himself under that gentle-

man's valiant protection. "He has not been well for a long time, and I know now just when it began; it was that day when the Herr Professor went out in the rain without his umbrella and came back with that American Miss and without his shawl"—

"Silence, Frederic!" interrupted the professor suddenly, and with such a vehemence, that Frederic started back affrighted before that unwonted tone. "You would do better to attend to your own affairs, than to meddle with things you know nothing about. Go now, and leave us alone!"

Confounded at the unwonted severity of his usually indulgent master, Frederic obeyed reluctantly, but the doctor, without paying the least attention to the professor's glance, which plainly enough betrayed a wish for his withdrawal, drew up a chair and sat down in it.

"You have been at your studies again? Of course! This magnificent summer's-day, when all the world hastens out into the open air, you sit here from morning to night, or rather until far into the night, at your writing desk. Tell me, for God's sake, how long do you think this can go on, and you bear up under it?"

The professor, although not without evident reluctance, had resumed his former seat, and ap-

peared not yet to have become master of his excitement. "I must have taken cold," he said, evasively.

"No, it is not cold," interrupted the doctor, "it all comes from so much study, which has now become a mania with you, and will bring you to your grave if you do not allow yourself some recreation. How often I have preached this to you! But what can one do with a patient who always listens gently and patiently, always says 'yes,' and always does just the contrary to what he is ordered to do!"

The professor had indeed listened with great patience. "I have always followed your directions," he affirmed in a low voice.

"Oh yes, literally! If, for example, I sent you to bed, you lay down obediently, but had lamp and books brought to the bedside, and studied until four o'clock in the morning instead of until two. You must possess a good constitution to enable you to do all this; until now it was only your nerves that were ruined. If you go on in this way a year longer, you will have the consumption; I give you my word for that!"

The professor rested his head on his hand, and gazed straight before him. "So much the better!" he said resignedly.

The doctor sprang up impatiently, and noisily shoved back his chair. "There we have it! You

really long for death! There is nothing healthy in your learning. Consumption of mind and body; that is the end of it all."

Fernow had risen at the same time. He smiled sadly. "Give me up, doctor; I repay your care only with ingratitude! My health is entirely undermined, I myself am best conscious of this, and with all your good will and all your medicines you cannot help me."

"With medicines—no," said the doctor gravely. "Only a radical cure can save you; but I fear it is quite useless to advise you."

"And what would your advice be?" asked the professor abstractedly, fastening his glance again upon his books.

"For a year—for a whole year long, you ought not to touch a pen, not even to look into a book, and above all, not to think of a syllable of science. Instead of this you must take constant physical exercise. and if you can obtain it in no other way, work with hoe and spade in the garden and keep at it until you grow hungry and thirsty, and can defy every change of weather. Don't look at me in such astonishment, as if I were pointing you out the direct way to the other world; such an entirely shattered nervous system as yours, only the most powerful remedies can avail. It is my firm conviction, that such treatment, energetically begun, and

persistently carried through, will save you in spite of all these premonitions of death."

The professor shook his head incredulously. "Then I certainly must despair of cure; you must yourself know that to carry on the work of a day laborer in my position is impossible."

"I know it to my sorrow! And you are the last who yield to such requirements. Well then, study on in Heaven's name, and prepare yourself for the consumption. I have preached and warned enough. —Adieu!"

With these words, spoken in great exasperation, the good natured, but somewhat choleric Doctor Stephen took his hat and went out at the door; but in the ante-room, the giant figure of Frederic had posted itself,—there was a dumb, questioning look upon his anxious face. — The doctor shook his head.

"Nothing is to be done with your master, Frederic!" he said. "Give him his usual medicine, it is the old complaint that has again"—

"Oh no, it is not that!" interrupted Frederic with great positiveness, "it is something entirely new, this time, and since that day when the American Miss"—

The doctor laughed aloud. "I hope you will not make the arrival of my niece answerable for your professor's illness," he said, greatly

diverted at this juxtaposition of things.

Frederic lapsed into an embarrassed silence. This certainly had not been his intention; he only knew that both these incidents occurred together.

"Well, and how is it really with your master this time?" asked the doctor.

Frederic, greatly embarrassed, kept twirling his hat in his hands; a literal description of the circumstances that had so impressed him, was beyond his power of language. "I do not know—but he is entirely unlike himself," he persisted, obstinately.

"Nonsense," said the doctor curtly. "I must know that better. You give him the usual medicines, and then above all see that you get him away from his writing desk to-day, and out into the open air; but take care that for his especial recreation he does not pack a folio along with him. Do you hear?"

So saying, the physician went down the stairs, and when he had arrived there, asked for his niece.

"She has gone out," replied Frau Stephen in a very ill humor. "She went at four, and, as usual, alone. Speak with her, doctor, I implore you, once again, and represent to her the impropriety and adventuresomeness of these long, solitary walks."

"I?" said the doctor; "no, my

dear, that is your business, you must expostulate, with her yourself."

"Expostulate!" cried the old lady, angrily; "as if anyone could succeed in that with Jané; whenever I venture a slight hint as to this or any other of her independent proceedings, I receive this invariable reply: 'Dear aunt, please leave all such matters to my discretion;' and not another word am I allowed to say."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "And do you really believe I should succeed any better?" he asked.

"But half the city is already talking about the freedom of this girl" cried the Frau Doctor, excitedly, "Everybody thinks us accountable for it all, and everybody is wondering why we allow her to go on as she does."

"Is that really so?" returned the doctor with stoical calmness. "Well, then, I only wish that all these people who are criticising us, could have Jane Forest in their houses a single week just to test their own authority. They would soon get tired enough of trying to control her. Jane, with her bluntless, and our professor up there with his gentleness, are two obstinate mortals, with whom all B. can do nothing. And so the only thing you and I can do about it, wife, is just let them both have their own way."

CHAPTER IV.

THE HERO OF THE PEN.

THE doctor was right. Miss Forest troubled herself very little as to whether the people of B. thought her solitary wandering proper or not. Not that she had any especial inclination for solitary dreamy roamings, but she wished to become acquainted with the environs of the town; and as, after Atkin's departure, she found no one she thought worthy to accompany her, she went alone.

One day, after a longer walk than usual, which took her some hours' distance from B., she ascended the Ruenberg, from whose summit there was a view of an ancient castle. Wearied with the long walk, she sat down upon a relic of the old wall, and leaning against the rock, gazed far out into the landscape. The misty veil which, on the day of her arrival, had so densely enveloped all, had now lifted, and the beauties then hidden from her view, now bathed in golden sunlight, lay outspread at her feet.

She leaned farther back into the shadow of the wall. This German landscape had an unwonted effect upon her; around it hovered a something which at sight of the grandest natural scenery she had never experienced, a breath of melancholy, of longing, of home-sickness. Home-

sickness! She had never understood the word, not even when she had seen her mother die of the malady, —not even when it had so overpowered her father in his dying hour. Now, when she trod the soil, to which she, a stranger in all else, still belonged by the sacred right of birth, there rose within her soul, dimly and mysteriously, as it were a distant, half sunken remembrance of that early childhood, when her father had not watched over her education, but had confided it entirely to her mother, who, with old songs and legends, had awakened in the child that longing which later the father's influence had so entirely obliterated or changed into bitterness.

It was a strange, almost uncanny feeling for Jane; and she knew the very moment when it began. Not at sight of a magnificent prospect like this, not at the rich landscape-pictures of a tour up the Rhine, which she had a little while before made with her uncle and Atkins, had this feeling first awakened. No, it was amid the swaying mists of that country road, at the edge of that willow hedge, from whose buds the first green of spring burst forth, when that gray veil enveloped all around, and only the murmur of the river broke through the silence; then it had for the first time awakened, and, in an unaccountable manner, it always attached it-

self to the form of the man who had at that time stood near her. Jane thought only seldom, and always with a sort of aversion, of that meeting. In spite of the ludicrousness of the hero, there lay in it something of that romance, which the matter-of-fact daughter of Forest so much despised; and now, just as she was about to repel the intrusive and ever-recurring remembrance, this became impossible;—she caught the sound of an advancing footstep, and Professor Fernow himself came around the angle of the wall.

For a moment, Jane almost lost her presence of mind at the sudden apparition which so peculiarly responded to her thoughts; but the professor seemed really frightened at so unexpected a sight of her. He started back, and made a movement to turn around, but all at once, the impoliteness of such a step seemed to dawn upon him; after a moment's hesitation, he bowed silently, and walked to the other side of the wall, where he took his stand as far as possible from the young lady; and still, from the narrowness of the space, they were none too far apart.

It was the first time since their meeting upon the suburban highway, that they had found themselves alone together. Their casual and unavoidable meetings in the house and garden had always

been signalized by the professor with a shy bow, which Jane had coolly returned; they had both shunned all conversation, and it seemed that they would preserve the usual silence to-day. The professor had arrived, exhausted, and out of breath; neither the weariness of the long pathway, nor the exertion of climbing, which he had so conscientiously undertaken in response to his physician's order for moderate exercise in the open air, had sufficed to redden his cheeks, upon which lay the same ashy pallor they had worn that afternoon; and the deep lines on the young man's forehead, the dark rings around the eyes,—all these only too well confirmed what Jane had often heard from her uncle, that the professor was working himself to death, that his days were numbered.

And still,—her thoughts must keep reverting to that moment when he had stood with her before the flooded pathway. Those had not been the arms of a consumptive which had so vigorously lifted her, so easily and safely carried her; and that quick flush of excitement at her question of his strength, had been anything but an indication of illness. She could not resolve the contradiction between that moment and the usually delicate appearance of the young man, which to-day was more plainly than ever revealed to her eyes.

"Do you often climb the Ruenberg, Mr. Fernow?" began the young lady at last, for the obstinate silence of the professor left her no choice but to open the conversation, and she had heard enough of this eccentric man to be aware that nothing offensive lay in his silence.

At the sound of her voice he turned hastily around, and it seemed as if he made an effort to retain in her presence, his usual dreamy, absent manner.

"It is the most beautiful place in the environs of B. I visit it as often as my time permits."

"And that is perhaps very seldom?"

"It is so, and especially this summer, when I must dedicate all my strength to an arduous work."

"Are you writing another learned work?" asked Jane in a slightly ironical tone.

"A scientific one," returned the professor with an emphasis that equalled the irony.

Jane's lips curled in derision.

"You think perhaps, Miss Forest, that this is both a thankless and fruitless effort," he said, with some bitterness.

She shrugged her shoulders. "I must confess that I have none too great reverence for book-learning, and that I cannot at all comprehend how one can lay his whole life, a free-will offering upon the altar of science, and write books which, like

yours, Professor Fernow, are of interest only to the learned, and which to the rest of mankind, must always remain dead, fruitless and valueless."

This was another specimen of Jane's horrible frankness, which had so often thrown her uncle into despair; but the professor seemed neither surprised nor wounded. He fixed his large melancholy eyes on the young lady's face. She already half regretted having begun the conversation, for if she could better hold her ground before these eyes than at that first interview, they still called forth that torturing, anxious sensation she could not control.

"And who tells you, Miss Forest, that I do it of my own free will?" he asked in a peculiarly emphatic tone.

"Well, one does not allow himself to be forced into such a direction," replied Jane.

"But supposing a homeless, orphaned child, thrown out upon life alone, falls into the hands of a learned man who knows and loves nothing in the wide world but science?—As a boy I was chained to the book-table, as a youth I was restlessly impelled onward, to exert my capabilities to the utmost, until at last the goal was reached. Whatever I in youth possessed of health or poetry, was irretrievably lost in this process, but he whom this use-

less book-learning has cost such sacrifices, is bound to it by indissoluble ties for the rest of his life. For this, I have sacrificed every other longing, and every hope."

There lay a sort of despairing resignation in these words, and the melancholy glance into Jane's face which accompanied them, awoke in her a feeling of resentment against the professor, and against herself. Why could she not remain calm under this glance? Surely if anything could have lowered this man in her eyes it was the confession he had just made. And so, not even from conviction or from inspiration, but from habit, from a vague sentiment of duty, he was working himself to death! To Jane's energetic nature, this passive endurance and persistence in a half-enforced calling, appeared supremely pitiable. The man who did not possess the strength and courage to rise to his proper place in life, might just as well sink into nothingness as a book-worm!

With a hasty excited movement, the professor had turned away from her, and Jane too soon found herself gazing upon the landscape now all aglow with the last beams of the setting sun. The roseate halo transfigured earth and sky; the blue mountains in their clear, transparent outlines caught a new lustre from the rosy light which enwrapped all the towns and villages lying at the

mountain's base; which flashed and flamed in the green and golden waters of the Rhine as they flowed on calm and majestic, far out into the illuminated plain, where against the western horizon, distant and scarce discernible, like a giant mist-picture, the mighty dome towered upward, the pride and crown of the old Rhenish stream.

The reflection of this same fiery glow lay upon the gray, weather-beaten stones of the old castle, upon the dark ivy which had woven around it its thick green meshes, while the wild, luxuriant vines hanging over the abyss, fluttered to and fro in the evening wind; and it lay also upon the faces of the two up yonder.

Jane was for some minutes so lost in gazing at the wonderful illumination, that she had not remarked the professor standing close by her side, and now, she was almost frightened at the sound of his voice.

"Can our Rhine also win a moment's admiration from *you*?" he asked in a tone of peculiar satisfaction.

"From me?" The thought suddenly occurred to Jane that he might have divined something of the weakness of which she had been guilty in this respect. She had certainly always retained a mastery over her features, it could be only supposition; but the supposition vexed her.

"*From me?*" she repeated, in an icy tone. "You may be partly right, Professor Fernow, I find some very charming features in this landscape, although upon the whole, it seems to me rather narrow and poor."

"Narrow! poor!" repeated the professor as if he had not rightly understood, while his glance, incredulous and questioning, rested upon her face.

"Yes, I certainly call it so!" declared Jane with a tone of haughty superiority and a touch of vexation. "To one who, like me, has lived upon the shores of the great Mississippi, who has seen the magnificence of Niagara, who knows the majesty of vast prairies and primeval forests, this German landscape can appear but narrow and poor."

The professor's face flushed—a sign that he was beginning to be angry.

"If you measure a landscape by space, you are right, Miss Forest. We are apt to employ other standards, which might perhaps seem petty to you; but I assure you that your landscapes would appear to us supremely empty and desolate; that we should think them tame or dead."

"Ah! Do you know them so intimately?"

"I do."

"I really wonder, Professor Fernow," said Jane with cutting irony, "that, without having seen our

landscapes, you are able to give so positive a verdict in regard to them. You appear to think our Mississippi region a desert, but you should at least know from your books, that the life which rules there is infinitely richer and grander than by your Rhine."

"An every-day life!" cried the professor growing still more excited; "a hive of bees in a restless struggle for success, a life directed but to the present moment! Your giant river, Miss Forest, with its thousand steamers, with its thriving populous cities and luxuriant shores, can never give you what the smallest wave of the Rhine brings in enticing murmurs to us all; the spell of the past, the history of nations, the poesy of centuries."

"To us"—here the professor suddenly and unconsciously dropped the English in which he had been speaking, for his native German—"to us, this chimes and echoes through a thousand songs and legends, it is wafted to us in every rustle of the forest, it speaks to us in the voiceless silence of every rocky cliff. From our mountains, from our castles, the mighty forms of the past descend; in our cities, the old races rise again in their pristine might and splendor; our cathedrals, memorials of imperishable magnificence and power, tower heavenward; the Loreley entices, and beckons us down beneath its

green waves, in whose deepest depths, sparkles and glitters the Niebelungen horde,—all this lives, and enchants us in and around our Rhine, Miss Forest, and this certainly, no—stranger can understand.”

Jane had listened, first in surprise, then in wonder, but at last in utter consternation. What had all at once come over this man. He stood before her erect and tall, his face almost transfigured by an inner light, his eyes glowing with excitement. She listened to the deep, fervid tones of his voice, she yielded to the spell of his eloquence, where word crowded upon word, picture upon picture, and it seemed to her as if here also a misty veil had been riven, and she caught a glimpse out into infinite space—gleaming with golden light. The chrysalis had suddenly fallen from the pale, suffering form, which so long under a ban, now came forth into its true light, and soared to its true place.

Jane Forest was not woman enough to remain long under such an infatuation, without exerting all her strength to break from it. Her whole inner being rose in arms; the whole pride and obstinacy of her nature arrayed themselves against this power, which for some moments had held her in willess control, against this influence that had so oppressed her. She must break the spell, cost what it would, and with quick determination, she

grasped after the first weapon that stood at her command—remorseless irony.

“I did not know you were a poet, Professor Fernow!” she said, mockingly.

The professor shuddered, as if a shrill discord had met his ear; the flush in his face died out, his eyes fell to the ground.

“A poet?—I?” he said in a half-stifled voice.

“What you have just been saying did not sound at all like prose.”

Fernow sighed deeply, and passed his hand over his forehead.

“I beg your pardon, Miss Forest, for having ennuyed you with poetry. Ascribe it to my ignorance of the rules of society,—whose first precept is, that one must not speak to a lady of that which she cannot comprehend.”

Jane bit her lips. This “learned pedant,” as she had called him this very morning, was revealing himself in strange ways. Poetic at one moment, he could be cruelly sarcastic at the next; but she was better adapted to this tone; here she could meet him as equal meets equal! The young lady in her vexation, quite overlooked the deep and painful excitement which had goaded the professor to a bitterness so unusual with him; and she did not cease her thrusts. She could not deny herself the dangerous satisfaction of calling forth

those lightning-like gleams of anger from the calm, dreamy, superficial being of this man;—gleams which betrayed passionate depths perhaps unknown to him. She felt that only in moments of the highest inspiration or of the highest exasperation, was he capable of these, and as it was beyond her power to inspire him, she resolved to exasperate him.

“I wonder so much the more, Professor Fernow, that you have guarded this susceptibility in so extraordinary a way; but really, in dreaming and poetizing, the Germans were always in advance of us.”

“In two things which stand infinitely low in your esteem!”

“I, at least, am of the opinion that man was created for deeds and not for dreams! This poetizing is only listless dreaming.”

“And consequently you despise it!”

“*Yes!*” Jane was fully conscious of the cruelty with which she uttered this rough *yes*, but she had been challenged, she resolved to wound; and it seemed indeed as if she had succeeded. A deep red flush mounted to Fernow’s forehead. Strange—he had taken it so calmly when she sought to disparage science, but her attack upon poetry he would not bear.

“You ought to be less prodigal of your contempt, Miss Forest,”

he said, “and there are things which deserve it more than our poetry.”

“Of which *I* have no conception.”

“For which you *will* have none, and which will yet assert its right, like the home-bud at that very moment when you called it poor and narrow.”

Jane was for a moment speechless with pride and anger. What had taught this man, who in his revenge and absence of mind often forgot the simplest, most familiar things, to glance so deeply into her soul, although her features never betrayed what was passing there? What induced him, with such exasperating clearness, to bring to light sentiments which she herself would not confess? For the first time that indefinable oppression she always experienced in his presence, found a decided reason; she felt dimly that in some way danger threatened her from this man; that she must at any price hold herself far from him, even on account of this one provocation.

Miss Forest drew herself up with her utmost dignity, and measured the professor from head to foot. “I regret, Mr. Fernow,” she said, “that your penetrating glance has so deceived you. I alone am accountable for my sympathies and antipathies; besides, I assure you that I thoroughly detest sentimentality and revery in whatever form,

and that to me nothing in the whole world is so antagonistic as—a hero of the pen.”

The word was spoken, and, as if he had received a wound, the professor trembled under this irony. The flame again flashed up in his face, and from his blue eyes darted a lightning glance that would have made any other than Jane tremble. For an instant a passionate, indignant reply seemed to quiver on his lips; then he suddenly averted his face, and placed his hand over his eyes.

Jane stood immovable. Now she had her will. The storm was invoked. She had made him angry, angry as he had been that day when he had so hastily lifted and carried her in his arms to disprove her insinuation of his want of physical strength.

What now?

After a momentary pause, Fernow turned to her. His face was pale but perfectly calm, and his voice lacked that peculiar vibration it had possessed during the whole interview.

“You seem to forget, Miss Forest, that even a lady’s privileges have their limit,” he said. “If the social circle in which you move, allows you so free an expression of your opinions, I beg leave to remind you that I do not belong to that circle, and will not tolerate direct insults. I should have answered a man

otherwise. As for you, I can only assure you that it will henceforth be my especial care that our paths do not again cross.”

And with a bow just as cold and distant, just as haughty as Miss Forest herself had at her command for persons not agreeable to her, he turned away and vanished behind the wall.

Jane remained standing there motionless, in a sort of bewilderment, which gradually yielded to the consciousness of what this man had presumed to say to her. He had mortified, chided, repulsed her! Her, Jane Forest! This pitiable scholar, upon whom until this hour she had looked with sympathetic contempt! The contempt indeed was over, but who could have dreamed that this man, so timid, so helpless in every-day life, could in a moment, when the conventional barriers fell, become so unmasked! In the midst of her resentment, Jane experienced something like a deep satisfaction, that he to her and to her alone, had shown himself in this light; but that did not lessen her exasperation, neither did the consciousness that she had driven him to extremities, and that the rebuke was just, in the least console her.

In one thing at least this German professor had succeeded, a success no one had before achieved; he had broken through the icy cold-

ness with which the young lady had thus far met all, and had brought to the surface an ardent glowing passionateless, which rose in arms against him. She hated this man, who had forced upon her the first humiliation; hated him with the whole energy of a proud, spoiled nature, which had deemed itself unapproachable, and now for the first time had found its master. The costly lace of her handkerchief had to atone; it lay torn in pieces on the ground; but she did not care. Neither did she care that the twilight was falling, that she was two hours' distance from B. and must go back on foot; for nothing did she care after this quarrel. With a passionate movement, she lifted her hat from the ground, and scornfully thrust aside with her foot the ivy twigs that came in her way.

"It will henceforth be my especial care not to cross your path again!' Well, Professor Fernow, you may rely upon it that I shall not cross yours, and so I hope we have parted forever!"

Jane gave her head a toss that indicated her contempt of the whole world in general and Walter Fernow in particular, and then with rapid steps she swept along the path leading down into the valley. There, dense shadows already lay, while thicker and thicker the twilight wove its gray veil around

the ruins of the old castle, around the place where two human hearts had come so near, and had parted so far asunder.

CHAPTER V.

FACE TO FACE.

A FEW days later, two gentlemen in elegant travelling dress, were walking from the railway station, up the street leading to Doctor Stephen's house.

"Don't be in such a hurry, Alison!" said the elder, somewhat pettishly; "I cannot keep up with you in this heat, and what will Miss Jane think if she happens to be at the window and sees you coming along at such a break-neck pace?"

The warning, superfluous as it might seem, was quite in place here; Alison moderated his pace as if he had been guilty of some unheard-of crime, and turned the glance with which he had been impatiently scanning the houses, to his companion.

"Meeting you was a great surprise," continued Atkins. "We believed you in London; was it not your plan to go directly from there to Paris?"

"Certainly, but as business called me to the Rhine, and as Miss

Forest had been for some weeks in B., I came out of my way so as to pass a few days with her. I was very much surprised at your decision to accompany her to Germany."

"You were surprised because I always derided the country," returned Atkins indifferently. "I came here mostly on Miss Forest's account, she is the only practical thing in this sentimental land; I am nominally Miss Jane's guardian, although she is more than independent in all things; and I did not think it proper for her to cross the ocean alone. And, besides, as I know so many Germans in America, I would not deny myself the satisfaction of admiring them in their own much vaunted fatherland. I hope you thank me for remaining at the side of your betrothed."

"Certainly!" replied Alison in a somewhat chilly tone, "I am only astonished that the requirements of Miss Forest demanded so long an absence on your part."

The old sarcasm again appeared in its full sharpness on Mr. Atkins' face, as he cuttingly replied. "Give yourself no uneasiness, Henry. Your future fortune is in safe hands."

"I did not ask in my own interest," said Alison angrily.

"But in those of Miss Jane, which in a year's time will be yours. Well, do not get angry! It is only natural that you should concern your-

self with this matter, and I perhaps owe you some explanation. You know, I suppose, that the deceased Mr. Forest, during the last years of his life, converted most of his property into money. The money is safely deposited, all the other business was settled in two months after his death; the landed property is in good hands; a fortune entrusted to my stewardship would not be placed in jeopardy for the sake of a pleasure tour, Mr. Alison."

In spite of his displeasure, Henry had listened with marked attention and satisfaction, he now knew the most important thing, and quickly changing the subject, he asked:

"And how do you like Germany?"

"I find it tedious enough. It is just what I thought, and the life here in this learned city of B. is perfectly unendurable! I assure you that by staying here Miss Jane makes a sacrifice to her father's wishes. I assure you she is thoroughly disgusted with these formalities and sentimentalities among which she gets so hopelessly entangled, while I take an unceremonious flight away from them all."

"And was it on this account you went to Homburg?"

"No, I had business there."

"Do you employ your European travels in business transactions," asked Alison gravely.

"Not I; I went in Miss Forest's interests. It was to look after an old debt we have often tried to settle, but in vain."

The young merchant's attention was now fully aroused.

"Is the debt a large one?" he asked, as if incidentally.

"Yes."

"And you hope to secure it?"

"I hope so."

"Then I wish you success," said Alison with animation. "It is always pleasant for a merchant to cancel old debts."

"Do you think so?" asked Atkins maliciously. "It may cost us half a million."

Happily, Alison did not hear these last words, which were spoken only half aloud; for at this moment, his whole attention was directed to the windows of the house before which they halted. Atkins rang the bell and the door was opened by Frederic who was expecting his master. His face grew noticeably long as he saw Mr. Atkins, who, during his stay in B., had not laid claim to the doctor's hospitality, but had lodged at a hotel, daily calling at the house where his ward was staying.

"Is Miss Forest at home?"

"No."

"And Doctor and Mrs. Stephen?"

"They, too, have gone out."

"Are they expected back soon?"

"Every minute."

"Then we shall do better to wait here in the garden than to go back to the hotel," said Atkins. "Frederic, announce our arrival to the family immediately upon their return."

Frederic gazed after the retiring gentleman with open displeasure. "And here is another! This makes the third who has come. These American guests will at last drive us out of house and home. I wish"—His further mutterings were lost in the closing of the door which he had shut with such violence that the window panes rattled.

"What is the matter with the fellow?" asked Alison, as they entered the garden, "he gave us a very singular reception."

Atkins laughed. "A German bear, gigantic, snappish, awkward, into whose wooden head a sort of national antipathy against us seems to have entered. I cannot boast of having seen anything but this bearish manner in him, although to others he is harmless and good natured, even to stupidity."

"Is he a servant out of the house?"

"Not exactly, he is in the employ of a—Ah, Professor Fernow!" exclaimed Atkins suddenly interrupting himself, "I am delighted to see you!"

The professor, who was just returning from the university, and had, as usual, taken the path

through the garden, returned the salutation and drew nearer.

"How do you do, Professor Fernow?" asked Atkins patronizingly. "You look ill; that comes from your learning! Will you permit me to introduce you to a countryman of mine? Mr. Alison, Mr. Fernow, professor in the university, and inmate of Doctor Stephen's house."

Countryman! Inmate of the doctor's house! These were two very indifferent, commonplace designations, upon which Atkins had not laid the slightest emphasis, and still they appeared to strike both young men in the same way. Alison's dark glance, with a suddenly awakened suspicion, fixed itself sharply and searchingly upon the professor's face, and Fernow's blue eyes flamed up in painful excitement, as he returned the glance with unwonted spirit. It was as if both in this, the first moment of their meeting, had a presentiment of hostile relations hereafter. Each bowed coldly and haughtily, as if an invisible barrier already lay between them.

CHAPTER VI.

A STRANGE PRESENTIMENT.

ATKINS, with his wonted vivacity, sought to introduce a conversa-

tion, but he did not succeed. For all that was said to him, Alison had a cold, polite assent; and the professor, even more reticent than usual, seized the first opportunity to take refuge in the house. After a few minutes, in his timid, courteous way, he took leave of the elderly American, bowed silently and distantly to his young companion, and left the two alone.

"Who is this Fernow?" asked Alison when the Professor was out of hearing.

"I have already told you. Professor in the university here, a shining light of science, a precious example of a German scholar, who with his investigations, and thousand-year-old rubbish and hieroglyphics, devotes himself to the good of humanity, and meantime withers up into a mummy. A very well conducted, blameless specimen besides, who made himself supremely comic in the role of knight and protector which he assumed towards Miss Jane on the day of our arrival."

Alison, who had been gazing after the professor, now turned suddenly around.

"Towards Miss Forest?" he asked hastily. "But personally not her sole protector? It is to be hoped that you were present."

"Not at all! Our carriage broke, out on a suburban road; it rained in torrents, I had to remain be-

hind with injured postilion, and was glad to consign Jane to the protection of the first gentleman who offered; in this case it was Professor Fernow, who was passing our tragic group, and to whom his learning had at last left sense enough to take the lady entrusted to him safely to B."

"Ah!" said Alison sharply. "And this adventure has naturally led to a more intimate acquaintance between the two, who, being inmates of the same house, meet and converse daily?"

For a moment, Atkins gazed at him in astonishment, then burst into a loud laugh.

"Henry, I really believe you are jealous! Jealous of this consumptive professor! Do you know what it means to be at thirty years invested with a professorship in a German university, with its horrible scientific thoroughness?—and he is not yet thirty! It takes a prodigy of learning for such a place! A man who devotes himself body and soul to his books, and knows nothing of the clear light of day. Really, you do the poor professor a cruel wrong if you believe that anything not bound in calf, exists for him; and as Miss Jane does not enjoy that enviable distinction, she unfortunately has no claim to his approval."

Alison paid no attention to this irony. "Does Miss Forest often

converse with him?" he asked impatiently.

"Not at all! At least when I am present, they both seem to have lost the gift of speech, so dumbly do they pass each other by. I implore you, Henry, not to insult the taste of your betrothed in this way! Where is your self-esteem? Do you really place yourself on a level with this bookworm?"

Alison's brow began to clear. "You are right, it would be ridiculous. At home I had to enter the list with many wooers of Miss Forest, and there were no despicable rivals among them. But I had no fear at sight of this consumptive professor, as you call him. I had a sort of presentiment that he might become dangerous to me."

"A presentiment!" echoed Atkins with a growl. "For Heaven's sake, Henry, don't begin to have presentiments! This is one of the German sensations. They never really reckon, they have all sorts of presentiments. And you, too, are not going to fall into this nonsense?"

Before Alison could reply, they were interrupted; a young servant-girl appeared to announce the arrival of the lady of the house and Miss Forest, and to invite the gentlemen in.

Jane, with her usual self-importance, had kept her engagement secret from her relatives, and the betrothed pair met as strangers

CHAPTER VII.

LOVERS, YET STRANGERS.

FIVE months had passed since Alison had seen Jane for the last time, in the elegant reception-room of her father's house, in an elegant toilet; now the tall figure came to meet him in a dark mourning dress, in the centre of the old-fashioned, simply-furnished apartment, which here served as the reception-room. Was it the contrast or the long separation? He had never seen her so beautiful.

"Pardon me, Miss Forest, for coming to visit you on my travels. Mr. Atkins assured me I should meet a kindly reception."

Jane reached him her hand. "A countryman is always welcome." Her glance met his; there was a wordless greeting; the only one between them; otherwise no token, not even the slightest, betrayed that here was a pair of betrothed lovers, who met after a half year's separation. Both had too much control over their features, were too much accustomed to conventional barriers, to betray a relation not yet designed for publicity.

Jane turned to her aunt, and presented "Mr. Alison, a friend of our family?" Frau Stephen bowed; she could not understand the confidence and independence with which her niece received and dis-

missed strange gentlemen, this girl of twenty years, who, in her opinion, should still take refuge under her aunt's maternal wing, and at the most, only now and then venture a timid remark. Jane had simply transposed matters, and assigned her aunt the silent rôle. This by no means timid old lady had begun to be wholly controlled by the influence of her niece; she now remained passive and overwhelmed by a feeling of her entire inconsequence.

Alison had seated himself opposite the ladies. They spoke of his travels, of England and France, of the Rhine; but Henry's conversational powers were not brilliant. He waited from minute to minute, and with ever increasing impatience, for Atkins to give him an opportunity to be alone with Jane, but Atkins appeared to feel a lively satisfaction in his repressed vexation, and opened out the conversation to seemingly endless limits. The young American was not the man to be trifled with in this way; as no one came to his aid, he himself seized the helm, and simply requested Miss Forest to allow him to give over to her the letters and tidings from home which were designed for her alone.

Jane arose, and with a hasty apology to her aunt, conducted the young gentleman into the sitting-room adjoining the reception-

parlor, leaving Mr. Atkins to console the old lady for this new American freedom. Scarce had the door closed behind them, when Alison stepped up to her, and with a powerfully repressed, but still impassioned gesture, took her hand in his.

"Pardon me Jane, for resorting to this awkward device! I could bear the suspense no longer."

He held closely the beautiful, cold hand which as before lay unresisting in his, but did not return its pressure.

"You should have chosen some less transparent device, Henry! Mr. Atkins would, sooner or later, have found an excuse for leaving us alone. It would of necessity have occurred to my aunt that we would prefer to speak of home matters by ourselves."

This cool reply somewhat restrained Alison's ardor." "You seem very much to fear lest Doctor Stephen may gain some knowledge of our mutual relations."

"I certainly hope that he will not."

"And still it cannot be avoided."

"I believe that remains alone with us, and so much the more so as your stay in B. is to be limited to a few days."

"Certainly! It does not appear that I have especial reasons for lengthening my visit."

Jane felt the thrust, and

thought best to waive a subject that threatened to be dangerous.

"You will go to Paris? They are speaking of a possible war with France."

Alison shrugged his shoulders. "I do not believe in such a possibility, but should it come to that, I should naturally return to be at your side and conduct you home, if the French army overflowed the Rhine country and Germany."

"Do you really think that would happen?"

"Yes! Have you any other idea?"

Jane threw back her head with a defiant gesture. "And yet, I think we should know how to defend our Rhine!"

"*We? Our Rhine?*" repeated Alison sharply. "I thought, Miss Forest, that hitherto it had been your pride and your glory to call yourself a daughter of that country to which you belong in all things—save the first brief days of your infancy."

Jane bit her lips so passionately, that a slight drop of blood came from them. Who bade these unwary lips even here repeat a reminiscence that would not vanish from her memory? '*We? Our Rhine?*' These were indeed not her own words, and the remembrance of that moment when she had heard them so glowing, so inspired, from another's mouth, in-

voluntarily sent a deep flush to her face. She turned hastily away, and bent over the flowers standing in the window.

Alison regarded her silently, but, intently and persistently. "It seems that you have already imbibed German sympathies," he said at last.

"I?" With a half-angry movement, Jane turned to him. "You err, Henry! I feel myself, even here circumscribed, exasperated. My stay here is a daily and hourly sacrifice! It is scarcely endurable."

In spite of her self-control, there was a peculiar emotion in her voice, and this did not escape Alison, who had always seen her so cold; but he interpreted it falsely; his eyes suddenly lighted up with a deep, inward satisfaction; he stepped close to her and again took her hand.

"Well then, Jane, it lies in your power to shorten this sacrificial period. Give me now the right you were to confer upon me after a year's delay, and you fulfil my highest wish. In a few weeks the necessary formalities might be arranged, and we could pursue together our continental travels; or, if you wished, I would at once take you back to America."

"No, Henry, no! that is impossible!"

Alison let her hand fall, and morosely stepped back, "Impos-

sible!" repeated he cuttingly. "And why so?"

Jane might well feel that her almost violent refusal rendered an explanation necessary.

"I am still in mourning for my father!" she said gently, "and in this entire matter I simply follow his arrangements and his wishes."

"It was your wish, Jane, not Mr. Forest's, I understood, that, in the presence of a dying father, you did not wish to be a bride; and it was my own journey which so long deferred the time fixed upon for our union. The one reason exists no longer; and destiny, which after months of separation, has now united us, has done away with the other. If, during your year of mourning, you do not wish to marry, so be it. I will not urge you, but I implore, I demand that you no longer veil our mutual relations in this profound secrecy; that you publicly acknowledge yourself my betrothed, and give me the right to visit you as your accepted suitor in the house of your relatives."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HEIRESS AT BAY.

THERE was such energy in his manner, such determination in his

just demand, that evasion seemed impossible, and any other young lady would scarce have attempted it; but Alison forgot that Jane was quite a match for him, that her energy was quite equal to his, and that this tone was least of all designed to incline her to obedience. This "*I demand*," sounded very strange and harsh in the ears of the proud girl. It called forth all her obstinacy.

"You forget, Mr. Alison, that the time has not yet come for you to '*demand*,' she said coldly. "I have imposed upon you a condition which you promised to fulfil; the reason therefor, now as then, rests solely in my judgment. I do not release you from your promise. I *will* not!"

The young lady's entire strength of determination lay in this "*I will not?*" and it sounded just as defiant and provoking as those other words from her lips a few days before. Perhaps she wished to drive this man also to extremities; but here the effect was different.

Alison was for an instant silent. Had Jane been merely beautiful and not rich, the wounded self-esteem of this man would have perhaps called forth an answer, which, from the bluntness of both characters, must have led to an irreparable breach. But the young merchant knew how to count the cost; he would not give up this

valuable possession for a woman's whim, and he well knew that here he could assert no authority. He yielded; but there was a portentous cloud on his forehead.

"You are as immovable and hard as a stone, Jane! Well, let it be as you wish, but"—his voice trembled in suppressed resentment—"but do not forget that I, too, have received a promise, and that at the appointed time, I will demand its fulfilment, inexorably as you have demanded mine."

Jane had become ashy pale, but her eyes met his firmly and undoubtedly. "My word is as good as my oath; I would break one as soon as the other," she said.

"And you repeat this oath to me now of your own free will?" His eyes were fixed searchingly upon her face. She seemed to hesitate for one moment, only one; then she laid her hand hastily in his. "I repeat it—of my own free will!"

Alison drew a deep breath, and pressed the hand ardently. "I thank you, Jane," he said. "In the spring I shall come back to demand my wife; until then, you are free as you have wished to be." A pause, oppressive for both, followed; Jane was the first to speak.

"I think we ought not to prolong this interview. It must be time to return to my aunt and Atkins."

Alison made no reply; he silent-

ly opened the door, and followed her into the next room, where Doctor Stephen had meantime appeared. The doctor's jovial vivacity which quite equalled Atkins' sarcasm, led the conversation into more agreeable channels.

"Well, how do you find Miss Jane?" asked Atkins, as half an hour later he withdrew with his young countryman.

"Greatly changed!" was the short morose answer.

Atkins looked vexed. "Foolishness! It is you who are changed, Henry! You have caught the spleen in England; it is time that merry Paris should be curing it."

Alison made no reply, he hastily reached Atkins his hand, and went.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE SCENT.

MEANTIME Jane had sought her own room, whither Atkins now followed her. She advanced to meet him, and hastily, as if she would cut short any other topic which might be supposed to more nearly concern her, she asked; "Do you bring me tidings of your journey? I can imagine its success! It is sheer foolishness, like all else that has thus far been done!"

"It is not so this time!"

Jane gazed at him as if she did not trust her ears.

"What do you say?"

"We have a trace."

Jane trembled. "Of my brother?"

"Be calm, be calm, Miss Jane," said Atkins, coolly, as he laid a hand upon her arm. "The matter is in no way decided! A trace which appeared only to vanish immediately, and which leaves us only a weak prop for future investigation; that is at present the only result I can impart to you."

Miss Forest had already regained her self-possession. "Very well! It is the first sign of life and being. What have you discovered? How did you discover it?"

Atkins quietly drew her to the sofa, and sat down by her side.

"Moderate your impatience, Miss Jane. I will be brief and clear as possible; you may learn later the results. You know that as we passed through Hamburg I took all necessary steps, I notified the police, I advertised in the public journals; but as usual in such cases, no answer came. Four weeks after, at your request, I returned to Hamburg to convince myself personally, of the hopelessness of our efforts. The first days of my stay, this seemed to be the only result of my journey; but on the third, a sailor came to see me."

"A sailor?" repeated Jane in astonishment.

"Yes, he had just landed, and had accidentally seen my advertisement. He came to tell me that twenty years before, some neighbors of his parents, poor fishermen who lived in a little village on the coast of the North Sea, coming from Hamburg, where they had been to market, had brought with them a boy they had found there, had kept him and reared him with their own son. The man's statement was so positive that it induced me to pay him the reward offered, and to write at once to the designated place."

Jane had listened with passionate intentness.

"And you have received an answer?"

"Yes, an answer with the minutest details. You will yourself read the letter, it has convinced me that this boy was really our young master Forest. The date, the age, the incidental descriptions, all agree with my advertisement. The failure of our investigations hitherto is easily explained. With the usual indiscretion of such people, instead of notifying the authorities of their discovery of the lost child, these fishermen calmly waited for some person to claim him sooner or later, and meantime, adopted him as their own. To that wretched, sandy fishing-hamlet, shut out from all the world, a newspaper scarce ever pene-

trates, this accounts for the failure of Doctor Stephen's efforts to find the child."

"Well, what about these people?" interrupted Jane, with eager impatience.

"They are dead! They died a few years after, and as their poor neighbors could and would not be burdened with the care and support of the two boys, the fisherman's son was sent to a relative, an artisan in a small North-German town, and young master Forest was received into the house of a clergyman in one of the adjoining villages; but years ago he gave up his parish and left that region. Here ends the letter, and my investigations for the present."

With a deep sigh, Jane arose. Discouraging as were these last words, it required only the slightest hint of her brother's possible existence, to arouse all her energies to action. In one minute she had reviewed all, had mastered the whole situation with her wonted clear-sightedness and promptness.

"We must above all things ascertain the abode of this clergyman, and in order to do this we must make inquiries in his former parish. If he is not to be found, then we must extend our inquiries to the mechanic who adopted the other boy; perhaps he still keeps up some sort of correspondence with his youthful associate. In any event,

we must quickly and decidedly follow the clue we had scarce hoped to find."

"That is my opinion. I only wished to advise with you in regard to the necessary proceedings. But one thing more! I have at your express wish, thus far, kept all this from Mr. Alison; he has no suspicion of the possible existence of a brother-in-law. Is it not time now to confide it to him?"

"No!" said Jane, almost roughly. "Not until we are sure. We could expect from him neither assistance nor gratification in efforts which would possibly deprive him of half the fortune upon which he reckons."

CHAPTER X.

FOR VALUE RECEIVED.

THE strange tone of her voice was remarked by Atkins. "What has occurred between you and Henry? He, too, was out of humor. Have you had a quarrel?"

"Yes," said Jane with sullen frankness, "I offended him."

"And he?"

"He?" The young girl's lips curled in scorn. "Well, he bore it."

Atkins frowned. "Have a care, Jane!—Alison is not the man to forgive an insult, least of all from you. He may have borne it for the

moment, but he will never forget it, and you may have to atone for it at some future day. I know him!"

"And so do I! Have no anxiety, Mr. Atkins, I do not fear this sort of revenge, neither do I care for it!"

"Avoid that tone, Miss Jane, at least in speaking of him. You might drive him to break his troth."

"Hardly! Mr. Alison too well knows my value to him."

Atkins shook his head. He had never before seen his ward thus. "You know as well as I, that Alison loves you in spite of all, and would have loved you without your fortune," he said.

"And would have chosen me?"

He was silent.

"Spare your championship!" said Jane bitterly. "I know to what considerations I shall alone owe the honor of one day being called Mrs. Alison!"

Atkins fixed his keen glance upon her for a moment. "And is this anything new to you?" he asked deliberately. "Did you not know this just as well as now when five months ago you promised him your hand? and this promise which the heir and future head of the house of Alison and Company then received"—he laid a marked emphasis upon the words—"would it have been given him if he had, for example, held there the modest position of clerk?"

The thrust took effect, for a mo-

ment, as if conscious of guilt, Jane lowered her head; the words with which she had announced her betrothal to her father came back to her remembrance. At that time all this had appeared simple and natural; now, indeed, five months had come and gone. five months and—three days!

"You see," continued Atkins cuttingly and relentlessly, "that the dollar also played its rôle with you, and why not? Mr. Forest educated you into sensible conceptions of life and its realities. Love is a luxury,—which the rich only can allow themselves—and Alison allowed it in his choice. But one must not fall so deeply in love as to forget one's reckoning, which is still the main thing in life."

"In America—yes!" said Jane in a hollow voice.

Atkins shrugged his shoulders. "In Germany there certainly may be extravagantly sentimental heads, that would have no regard at all for a million, and are in a position to unhesitatingly turn their backs to an heiress, if they happen to be not quite pleased with her. Will you reproach Mr. Alison, because he knows better how to estimate such advantages? Those gentlemen in their exalted manly pride may appear very magnanimous, but—they will never become millionaires."

"You are right," said Jane has-

ily, and in a voice of icy coldness. "*To every one his own.*"

Atkins gazed at her as if he did not really know what the answer meant. She had again become thoroughly Miss Forest in her impenetrable repose, as she now stood before him, and yet, there had been a tone of irony in her words. But it was a useless endeavor to seek to solve the enigma to-day; he gave it up.

Rising at the same time, he took a letter-case from his pocket and reached it to her. "We have arrived at the main thing," he said. "Here you find the letter I have mentioned, and all the other notices; examine them critically. This evening I will consult farther with you; now, I must leave you."

Jane reached him her hand. "I thank you!" she said, "And as for my ill-humor to-day"—the apology seemed difficult to her, but she must have felt its necessity—"think nothing more about it. There are moods we cannot control. I shall see you again."

When Atkins was outside the door, he paused, and once more shook his head. "There are moods, ahem! This is wonderful. Henry has presentiments and she moods!—Things they had better let alone, both of them. But he is right; she is changed; and if I were to begin to surmise, then I should say"—here Mr. Atkins

hurled a very ungracious glance over to the watery mirror of the river glittering in the sun, and which was visible between the trees of the garden—"I should say there lies a sort of premonition here in this German atmosphere, and that this accursed Rhine, before we think of it, will be letting loose something of a tempest about our heads!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE DAWN OF WAR.

THE American's words proved true, although in another sense than he had intended. His apprehensions became a political prophecy. There was indeed something in this German atmosphere, and it was upon the Rhine, that the first lightnings gleamed, heralding the approaching storm. France had declared war! The blow came like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, and as in rolling thunders, from its rocky mountains to the sea, all Germany echoed the call to arms in thousand-fold reverberations.

Upon the Rhine, every city, village and hamlet was all aglow; here, the excitement was more fiery, more ardent than elsewhere; for it was the Rhineland for whose sake the momentous game was to be

played, and every man, down to the poorest peasant, felt himself called upon to defend his precious inheritance, to avenge his insulted country, and prevent the intended robbery. In one giant, unbroken procession, Germany threw its assembled forces upon the imperiled boundaries; mightier and mightier swelled the advancing tide of armed men, more and more densely grouped the soldier-masses around the threatened palladium of the nation. For this, the enemy was not half prepared. Those green waves already rolled on under secure protection; shoulder to shoulder, stood the now united Germany, keeping guard on the banks of its Rhine, ready to protect the sacred, ancient stream or to hurl it, an annihilating tide, into the enemy's country.

Nowhere did the fires of enthusiasm mount higher than in B. The students hastened to join the ranks or the sanitary corps; the professors closed their lectures, and when age and health permitted, placed themselves at the head of the students; the women exerted all their powers to send aid and comfort to the soldiers soon to be wounded in the field. All were impelled onward as by one mighty impulse; all was feverish activity and excitement; here, in the city, the once strictly-guarded barriers of class and position were broken down; here, as throughout the

fatherland, the old hostility between North and South was forgotten; all united in one common sacrifice, one renunciation; all were borne onward by one common tempest of enthusiasm.

CHAPTER XII.

A ROCKET IN THE CAMP.

IN the first days of this excitement, upon a lovely July morning, Jane sat alone in the balcony chamber, whose doors, leading to the garden, were wide open. Outside, the glowing sunshine lay upon grass and shrub, upon the waves of the river gliding past; the roses were in their full splendor; beetles and butterflies flitted merrily past, and the large, old-fashioned room, with its vine-wreathed windows, its high backed chairs and sofas, its monotonously ticking wall-clock, looked as peaceful and comfortable as if no outside alarm of war could disturb the rest and peace of this house.

But no rest and peace lay upon the face of this young girl; bending low over a newspaper, she seemed to be reading something which fettered her whole attention; for in eager intentness, her glance followed the lines, and she neither heard the advancing step nor saw

the form which stood close before her upon the balcony.

"Are you so much absorbed, Miss Jane?" said Atkins entering the room. "You seem to have found something very interesting. But what can be the matter with you?"

Jane had hastily risen, and turned her face to him; the newspaper was still in her hand. If she had not been accustomed to such strict self-control, perhaps her features would still more have betrayed the stormy emotion which thrilled her whole being; now only the glowing cheeks, the flaming eyes expressed it; but they said enough to give the lie to her hasty subterfuge.

"It is nothing, nothing at all; only I am suffering from the intolerable heat, from which I have vainly sought refuge here."

Atkins gazed at her distrustfully, and a sudden thought seemed to occur to him; there was only one single topic upon which he had ever seen Jane excited.

"Have you learned anything further of that affair? Have you found a new trace?"

Jane had already mastered her emotion. She calmly laid down the paper. "Nothing of that sort; nothing at all! I was hoping, on the contrary, that you came to bring me new tidings."

He shook his head. "I have received none; I expected none. The

authorities at this moment have neither time nor inclination for private researches; these would be difficult to them now, when everything human and otherwise, is so out of place. A journey on our part would be of no avail; aside from the impossibility of travelling now, we do not know where to go. Weeks may pass before we receive an answer to our last letter; we shall be obliged to wait."

"Wait!" echoed Jane, "yes, wait forever! And meantime we lose the clue we have just found. How sad it was that this fisherman and his wife must die!"

"It was a very fortunate thing for you and young Mr. Forest," returned Atkins dryly; "for this alone rescued him from the circle into which untoward fates had thrown him. We certainly do not know upon what footing he entered that clergyman's house; let us hope it was as a foster-son, and that all former neglect was there repaired. In any other case the much desired re-union might be very painful; or, would it be a matter of indifference to you, Miss Jane, to find your nearest blood relation unfitted to move in your own sphere?"

The young lady was silent. She had often thought that she should find her brother poor,—but low or ill-bred,—the idea had never for a moment occurred to her; and it now won scarce a moment's power over

her; her whole pride rose against it.

"My brother has the blood of his father in his veins; that tolerates no lowness! If he lives, he has risen above a sphere unworthy of him. I know that!"

"Without having learned either to read or write? Ahem! You forget that education aided your father in all his undertakings. A student who has received his education in a German high school, is fitted for any station in life. A fisherboy—well I hope our excellent clergyman has saved us from that mortification; but this war, which has so suddenly broken out, plays us a sorry game; it brings all our researches to an end."

With a sigh of impatience, Jane resumed her seat, while Atkins stepped to the table and took up the newspaper in which he had found her so absorbed.

"Have you read the 'Appeal to the German Nation' that stands at the head of the first column?" asked he.

"Yes," came hesitatingly, and as it were with inward reluctance, from Jane's lips.

"A strange composition!" said Atkins, half mockingly, and half with a gravity not usual to him. I do not comprehend how a man can mix such a senseless lot of poetry into the prose of a newspaper article. In any event, the author of

this must be some sort of a poet, and certainly none of the worst. A mere journalist surely has not written it: it has altogether too much "

"Inspiration!" added Jane, with that rare uplighting of her dark eyes.

"Yes, but that means it is extravagant! Well, this German inspiration always is! But the article has genius and fire, we must admit that; and in the present excitement of B., which is already at the boiling point, it will be like a spark in a powder-keg. Half the city has already lost its senses over it, every student in the university is frantic; the words are setting fire to everything, like congreve rockets. I only wonder how long this brilliant display of fireworks is going to last."

Jane glanced at him somewhat scornfully. "But all this at least gives you a change," she said not without irony. "You found Germany so dull, past all endurance."

"Yes, I did find it so!" growled Atkins, "but I would rather endure the former dulness than be here among a crazy people, whose only praiseworthy virtues, humility and modesty, are now entirely discarded. Do you suppose that they now respect us foreigners, that they concern themselves at all about us? I am horribly neglected at my hotel; every care and attention is for the German officers. On the

streets, at re-unions, in conversation, I am every hour made to feel how utterly superfluous a being I am among these Teutonic gentlemen. Your amiable Herr Frederic thinks it no longer necessary to place the least rein upon his bearish nature, and seems every day to develop a greater appetite for devouring me at breakfast. Even the good Frau Stephen begins to assert herself! Did she not yesterday say something really malicious to you when you would not allow yourself to be pressed into her patriotic committee? Would she have dared this a little while ago? They are rebelling even against you, Jane; you must see it. Heiress! American! Englishman! All these are nothing to them, now that they have become a united people. They need none of us any more; they are Germans."

At the last words, a deep flush mounted to Jane's forehead, but she did not look up.

"I have declared to my aunt, that as soon as there are suffering and danger to relieve, I will be in my place; but that I think these enthusiastic demonstrations, in which the ladies now so much delight, unnecessary and superfluous."

"And so they are!" replied Atkins, excitedly. "Hold your ground there, at least! Do not yield a foot's-breadth. And now

just hear that uproar at the door-bell ! I would wager, that here is again some newly aroused patriot, who, a week ago, rang the bell modestly, and now, as a matter of course, introduces himself with this deafening clamor ! ”

The malice of the American had this time been directed against his host. It was Doctor Stephen who now opened the door, and rather excitedly entered.

“ Well, and even this shall— Ah, I beg your pardon, I did not know that any one was here. But I had to ring three times before the maid stirred out of her kitchen. When Frederic is not in the house all goes wrong.”

“ And I, too, missed our distinguished porter ! ” said Atkins with that extraordinary politeness which with him always concealed some malice. “ In any event, we must congratulate the Prussian army upon such an acquisition.”

“ Yes, Frederic has received marching orders,” said the doctor, with a suppressed sigh. “ He rode over to H yesterday, but is to return. The professor went at the same time.”

“ Professor Fernow ? And what has he to do in H. ? ”

“ He must submit to the formality of an examination, which in times like these none can easily avoid. Of course it will be only a form with him, but we shall have to lose

Frederic. We can get along without him ; but how the professor, who he has so petted and spoiled, can content himself with another servant, Heaven only knows ! ”

So saying, the doctor stepped over to his niece, who seeming to pay no heed to the conversation, had again taken up the newspaper. He looked over her shoulder at the sheet.

“ I think you exaggerate Professor Fernow’s interest in unlearned and practical things,” said Atkins mockingly. “ Behind his writing-table and his folios, he will as little remark the change of servants, as he would have remarked anything of the war, if he had not been obliged to take that journey to H.”

The doctor’s small gray eyes gleamed with a peculiar malicious pleasure as he glanced over to the American, “ Ah ! Do you really think so ? Have you read the ‘ Appeal to the German nation ’ which appears in the journal to-day ? ”

“ Yes,” replied Jane hastily, while with a sudden intentness, she raised her eyes to her uncle.

“ And you too, Mr. Atkins ? ”

“ The congreve rocket which this morning set afire the good city of B., and will probably enflame hundreds of other cities ? Yes, Doctor Stephen, we have read it.”

“ That delights me. The congreve

rocket came out of my house—the article is by Professor Fernow.”

Jane trembled, and let the journal fall as if she had all at once taken a glowing coal into her hand ; but Mr. Atkins started from his chair, stood erect a moment, and then just as suddenly sat down again.

“It is not possible !” said he dryly.

“Well, I have heard that word at least thirty times to-day ?” replied the doctor triumphantly, without feeling in the slightest degree offended. “All have cried out to me, ‘impossible !’ I could not have believed it myself if the awkwardness of Frederic, who was sent to take the article to the printing office, had not revealed all. I naturally awaited its effect, and then I gave my secret to the four winds. It fell like a bomb into the university ; it has kindled a fire everywhere. The professor must make up his mind to a reception when he returns, and I to a scene with him, for he will be enraged at my indiscretion. Bah ! He did not take me into his confidence, I had no silence to keep. What do you say to all this, Jane !”

“I ? nothing !” said Jane with the severest tone and emphasis that lay at her command. Then she turned away, went to the window, and pressed her forehead against the panes.

“And you, Mr. Atkins ?”

The gentleman addressed leaned back resignedly in his chair.

“I shall await further developments, Doctor Stephen. You will perhaps next inform me that the professor has stormed a battery, and that Frederic has given an archaeological lecture in his place. Do not seek to spare me in the least ; I am prepared for all ; I shall never again be surprised at anything here in Germany.”

The Doctor laughed aloud ; but his merriment all at once ceased, and he gazed anxiously out at the window.

“What has happened now ? Here is Frederic coming back already, and in such haste ! What is the matter with the fellow ? He seems greatly agitated.”

It was surely Frederic hastening at a full run through the garden. He now burst into the room in such excitement that even the presence of the much feared American Miss and her more hated companion, did not affect him in the least.

“What is the matter ?” asked the doctor hastily. “Has anything happened, Frederic ?”

“Yes,” whispered Frederic, breathlessly. “Something has happened—the Herr Professor” —

“An accident ? Where ? Upon the railway or over in H. Speak out quickly !” urged the doctor, in serious alarm.

"Over in H.!" burst out Frederic despairingly. "The Herr Professor—he, too, is going with us to the field—we march to-morrow morning!"

The momentary effect of these words was a deathly silence. Jane had turned around, and was gazing at the unhappy messenger as if she seriously doubted his sanity; the doctor stood there as if struck by a thunderbolt; but Mr. Atkins, after an instant's pause, said, half aloud:—

"Now, nothing is really wanting, now, but Herr Frederic's lecture upon archæology!"

"But are my military colleagues fools?" broke out the doctor, in great exasperation. "Professor Fernow declared capable of bearing arms! My patient, who I have attended for three years! How in Heaven's name has this happened?"

"I do not know how it really came about," said Frederic, to whom anxiety and excitement had lent a wonderful gift of speech; "but it is my master's own fault. I was standing very near him when one of the doctors gave him a side glance, shrugged his shoulders, and said: 'Well you are not fit for military duty; you could scarce carry a musket!' God only knows why the Herr Professor took this so ill; his whole face all of a sudden became red as blood; he gave the doctor an angry glance, drew

back a few steps, and then said in a loud voice: 'I beg at least for an examination!' 'If that is all, you shall have it,' answered the surgeon-in-chief, and you can yourself decide" —

"Was it the surgeon-in-chief?" interrupted the doctor. "I should have supposed so! He takes all! even those who, at the very first march, will have to be left lying in the hospital. Well, go on!"

"He only asked: 'Have you any illness?' 'No!' answered the Herr Professor, and set his teeth together, for the men were all staring at him. Then he drew himself up, his face became fire-red even to the forehead, and he did not look at all sick. The surgeon gave him a slight examination, and then said: 'Nonsense, colleagues, we cannot now be so critical; his chest and lungs are sound; this slight weakness comes from close confinement and study, and will soon pass away. You are accepted, never fear!' I thought I had received a paralytic stroke, and the Herr Professor drew a breath deep enough to rend his breast."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRIUMPH OF PRIDE.

THE doctor began to pace excitedly up and down the room; but

Atkins now joined in the conversation.

"Do not take it ill Doctor Stephen; your professor is a genius, and this is only one of those freaks of genius which borders on madness. A consumptive professor to come down from his chair, and enroll himself with the army! A lovely accession!"

"Fernow is not consumptive," said the doctor with great positiveness. "My colleague knows that as well as I, and his nervous disease might not be discernible in a moment of excitement;—to learn that would require longer observation. His position does not fully release the professor from the service; he is young yet, scarcely as old as Frederic. If I had only had a suspicion of this proceeding, I would gladly have prevented it by giving the necessary hint about the nervous trouble, which God knows I could have done with a good conscience. But who could have foreseen all this? The matter was not arranged here in B.—and now it is too late."

"But Herr Doctor"—in mortal anguish Frederic gazed at the physician,—*"the Herr Professor cannot march with the soldiers. You know he can bear no draughts of air, no heat, not even cold; that everything has to be cooked for him in a peculiar manner, and that he gets ill if he even goes out with-*

out his umbrella. Good God! he will die before the first week is over!"

"Well, don't take it so tragically," said the doctor, "We will see what can be done. Your master's proceeding cannot be recalled, but perhaps we can arrange it so that he will be allowed some light service in some of the bureaus or official departments. I will take the necessary steps in this direction; but above all things I must speak to him myself. He came back with you?"

"Yes," said Frederic, with a sigh of relief, "I only ran on ahead."

"Well, go now, and arrange your own affairs. Are you, too, going, Mr. Atkins?"

"Only for a quarter of an hour—to get cooled off! I feel an urgent necessity of convincing myself that somewhere there exists in B. something that is not upside down. Miss Forest seems to have a similar feeling. May I request your company, Jane!"

"I — am weary!"

The young lady sank into an arm chair, rested her head on her hand, and thus withdrew her face from further observation.

"Jane is evidently out of sorts to-day!" said the doctor to Atkins, when they reached the balcony outside, whither he had accompanied his visitor. "Scarce a word can

we get from her! She seems to have changed very much during the last fortnight. Do you know the reason of this persistent ill-humor?"

"The reason, at this moment, abides in Paris," thought Atkins, but he replied aloud, and in an indifferant tone: "I suppose that Mr. Alison, my young countryman, to whom I introduced you a short time ago, brought Miss Forest letters and tidings from her intimate acquaintances, which are the cause of the change in her demeanor. At least, I have received a hint to that effect."

"Well, that is only natural," said the doctor unsuspectingly. "I feared there was something in my house or in its surroundings, which had displeased her."

Jane, meanwhile, remained motionless in her place. The door-bell rang anew, but this time more gently than before; a step echoed in the hall, but she did not stir until the door of the balcony-room opened. Then she started up. Professor Fernow stood before her! They had not met since that evening upon the Ruenberg; he had, indeed, not crossed her path, and the persistence with which he avoided a repetition of those earlier accidental meetings in the house and garden, was only excelled by the resoluteness with which Jane shunned every possibility of a re-

union. For a fortnight, they had managed to forego the most casual glance, the coldest greeting; and now, all at once, they stood face to face, so near, so entirely alone, that the meeting could not be ignored.

Jane had sprung from her chair; whatever she might have been thinking a moment before, all vanished at the sight of this man, whom she could never forgive for his triumph, and her humiliation. The old, hostile spirit again raged wildly within her. Why did he now appear so suddenly in her uncle's apartments which he had never before entered,—here, where he must apprehend a meeting with her? Was this appearance on her account? The young lady stood there ready for the fray, determined with her whole strength to defy a might to which this time certainly she would not yield.

But her heroism was, just now, quite superfluous; it happened differently from what she had dreamed. The professor still remained upon the threshold; his glance slowly swept the room, but it did not rest upon her.

"I beg your pardon; I seek Doctor Stephen."

"My uncle is in the garden."

"I thank you."

He closed the door behind him, and, without looking at her, walked through the room to the balcony.

Jane's brow flushed deeply; she had made up her mind to meet an attack, and met, instead, the most entire disregard; this was more than she could endure; her hand convulsively grasped the arm of her chair.

Meantime, in the balcony, the professor had run against the doctor, who was just returning from the garden, and at once engrossed him entirely.

"Well, here you are at last! Professor, in God's name, what kind of a freak have you been playing? Frederic has thrown the whole house into an uproar by his ill-starred tidings."

So saying, without further parley, he grasped the professor by the arm, and drew him back into the house. This seemed to be the last thing the professor wished; he followed the doctor with evident reluctance, and, regardless of the invitation to sit down, stood upright by the chair offered him.

Without a word, Jane rose and left the room. The doctor gazed after her in surprise and displeasure; the discourtesy of his niece, toward this inmate of his house, began to surpass all bounds. Fernow's lips quivered, but no glance betrayed that he had even noticed this movement.

Miss Forest, meantime, had not gone far; in the next room, morose and hostile, she leaned against a

window. She would not remain in the same room with the man who allowed himself to ignore her and her resentment, but—she would hear what he wanted of her uncle, and, through the half-open door, she caught every syllable of the conversation, which the doctor opened with an impressive lecture.

"And now, before all things, tell me, has that Frederic lost his wits, or is it true that you have been declared fit for the military service, that you yourself urged this declaration, that you have represented yourself as healthy, while it would only have cost you a word, a mere silence even, to have proved quite the contrary? Have we heard aright?"

The professor cast down his eyes. "It was a sudden inspiration," he said, softly; "I was sure of rejection, but the rather contemptuous sympathy of the examining physician enraged me beyond measure. To be sent home as a miserable weakling, when all were hastening to the conflict,—that I could not bear! It was an act of folly for which I must atone with my life; but—I would do the same thing again!"

"You seem at times to have very wonderful inspirations," said the doctor with a glance at the morning journal. "Well, we will speak of that another time, our first business now is how we shall atone for

this stupidity,—now, don't fly into a passion, I mean the surgeon, not you—how we shall atone for this fellow's stupidity. I will preach him a sermon! I shall drive over to H. with you, and he shall use his influence to have you detailed for duty in some of the bureaux. This is the only thing we can do, as you cannot now wholly withdraw from the service."

A dark, portentous glow overspread the professor's face; his brow contracted, and his voice had a singularly angry tone, as he replied: "I thank you for your good intentions, doctor, but I must decline all intermeddling on your part in my affairs, I am called to active service, and shall follow the call in the sense in which it was given."

The doctor gazed at him in speechless astonishment. He had been accustomed to absolute authority over his patient, who had always yielded him the most implicit obedience; and now, all at once, he had risen in open rebellion against his best and most deliberate conclusions, this was too much for the doctor; he grew angry.

"Are you mad?" he cried excitedly. "You will enter active service? *You*? No, that surpasses all conception."

The professor was silent, but he set his teeth together as Frederic had before described, a deep flush covered his face, and he gazed at

the doctor with a glance which forced that gentleman to assume another tone.

"Give me only one reason, one single sensible reason, for this insane proceeding!" he said, almost imploringly. "Could you not serve the Fatherland just as well with the pen, if you could only bring your mind to that? Why will you not enter one of the bureaux? only tell me why."

"I will not!"

"You have an obstinate head!" cried the doctor again becoming angry. "In this you have a remarkable likeness to my niece. '*I will not!*' and now the whole world might rise against it; but it must be! Exactly Jane's manner, exactly her tone; just as if you had learned of her. One is just like the other; you would make a nice, 'married pair!'"

"Doctor, please spare me this foolish jesting!" broke out the professor with great violence, at the same time stamping furiously.

For a moment Doctor Stephen stood utterly dumb before this passionate outbreak of his amiable patient, then he said, in a tone of sincere astonishment.

"I believe that even *you* can be rough and violent!"

Fernow frowned and turned away.

"Well it was only a jest!" said the doctor apologetically. "I know

that you and Jane stand half upon a war-footing ; but you can become very angry now, professor ! I notice that, for the last two months, you have not been the same person you used to be ! ”

Fernow did not defend himself against the reproach with a single word ; he preserved an obstinate silence.

“ Well, to go back to the main business, ” began the Doctor anew—but this time in a low voice—“ you will not accept my proposition ? ”

“ No ! ”

“ You will really march to-morrow with the army ? ”

“ In any event. ”

“ Well then—I cannot compel you, and if it cannot be otherwise, ”—here the doctor’s patriotism broke through all resentment ; he cordially extended his hand to his patient—“ well then, go in God’s name ! Who knows ? The surgeon-in-chief, may be cleverer than we all ; of one thing at least he has convinced you, one which you would never believe from me : that you are not consumptive, that you have no decided illness, and as to your nerves—do you remember what I prescribed to you four weeks ago ? ”

The professor slowly raised his eyes.

“ Some powerful remedy, ” he said softly.

“ Certainly ! A radical cure, at which you were horrified at that time. You would not take upon yourself the life of a day-laborer ; but you now plunge into the military life, without asking me. Well, I should not certainly have advised so powerful a remedy as this, for we cannot cease taking it at will ; if the dose is too strong, we must either bend or break ! But if you are determined to venture upon it—good luck to you ! ”

The professor smiled sadly. “ I have little confidence in this blood and iron cure, ” he said calmly. “ I shall fall, I feel sure of that, either in face of the enemy, or in consequence of the unwonted exertion. But it does not matter ; in any case it will be better and more speedily than to die at my writing desk after a consumption, years in duration. Do not rob me of this conviction, doctor ; it is the best I take with me ; I shall at least be of some use in the world ! ”

“ Do not approach me again with your premonitions of death ! ” cried the doctor excitedly. “ To die—nonsense ! We in B. forbid ourselves that idea. And so you are of no use in the world ! You have written no work over which the whole learned world is beside itself in admiration, eh ? ”

The professor’s lips quivered, as he said bitterly ; “ and to the rest of the world, it will remain mere

nonsense,—dead, fruitless, valueless.”

“Do you really think so? And your article in this morning’s paper, was that, too, mere nonsense? Yes, be horrified as much as you like, because I know; the whole city knows, the university also. Professor since you have written that article, I deem all things possible to you, I doubt you in nothing more!”

Fernow scarce heard these last words; his glance had followed the motion of the doctor’s hand as he pointed to the morning paper, and his eyes suddenly flamed up as if in deep, glowing satisfaction—the paper lay in the arm chair where Jane had just been sitting.

“And you ought to be ashamed of yourself,” cried Doctor Stephen growing more and more excited; “you ought really to be ashamed of yourself, for having so little self-esteem, when with your pen you can rouse thousands to the most glowing enthusiasm.”

The professor’s face again grew dark; a hard, bitter expression lay upon it.

“With the *pen*,” he said slowly. “The pen must always fall into disrepute when the moment demands deeds. With all my knowledge and abilities, I stand below Frederick, who, with a pair of vigorous arms, can fight for the Fatherland. At the highest, I can die for it, and for this, I must still thank your

surgeon-in-chief; he, at least, has lifted from me the curse of being only a *hero of the pen*!”

The doctor shook his head. “If I only knew how all at once you have become possessed of such terrible bitterness! This sounds as if some one had given you a deadly insult in these words. I tell you your whole nature is changed.”

With a deep, repressed sigh, as if he would throw off a heavy burden, Fernow rose to his full height.

“I entirely forget what brings me to you,” he said evasively. “They leave us little time; we must return to H. this evening, for we are ordered to march early tomorrow morning. I would request you to take my rooms and my library under your care. In case of my death, you can dispose of the former as you think best; the latter must go to the university; it contains many valuable books, a large share of which I have inherited.”

“Yes, and if a formal testament is to be made,” interposed the doctor, “I beg you give me the address of your relatives, so that I may be prepared for any emergency. Hitherto, I have made no inquiries concerning them; you have maintained such a strict secrecy in regard to your family affairs.”

“Secrecy! I had nothing to conceal. I have no relatives.”

“What! not a single one?”

“Not one; I stand entirely alone in the world.”

There lay a quiet, but deep anguish in these words. The doctor preserved a sympathetic silence; Fernow reached him his hand.

"I must now bid you farewell. I have much to arrange, but I will see you again this evening."

He went. Doctor Stephen accompanied him to the door, and they parted with a cordial pressure of the hand. The professor entered the parlor through which he must pass in order to reach the hall; his features had won again the gentle, melancholy expression peculiar to them; but suddenly he started, and drew back—he caught a glimpse of Miss Forest.

She had not left her place at the window, but she had stepped forward somewhat, so that he could not avoid seeing her, and her glance met his. Jane's eyes were capable of no soft, dreamy glance, and even their fire was always like the glow of Northern Lights over an ice field; but still, a strange power lay in those shadowing depths, the might of a proud, unyielding will, which knew not how to entice, but to compel; and she was in the fullest measure conscious of her power. Seldom as she had recourse to this power, whenever she did enforce it, the victory remained with her, and it had been a victory over no common individuals. The obstinate character of her father had bowed to this will; it had silenced

the ever-ready sarcasm of Atkins; it had brought the cold, equally rigid nature of Alison under her control. And now it must also enforce something else; the step which, in spite of all that had happened, must and should cross her path, the farewell word which she must once again hear from his lips—for this, these eyes now beamed in the full radiance of their splendor, and deep below, under all this ice flamed something warmer than the mere glow of boreal fires.

This mysterious power seemed also to subdue Fernow; as if spell-bound, his glance rested upon her face; he saw that she was waiting, waiting for a farewell. It would cost him only one step, one single word; here was involved an absence perhaps without return. Over Jane's features flashed a triumphant glance—then all at once the professor's face grew dark, every muscle was strained for an energetic resistance. Slowly, as if step by step, he would withdraw from the influence of a demoniac power, he tore his eyes from her face; his lips quivered as he set them firmly together, to shut in any farewell word; his breast rose and fell convulsively in an agonizing inward conflict; but the wounded pride of the man held its ground before temptation. He turned to go; a bow, cold, distant as that parting one upon the Ruenberg, and the

door closed behind him. He had kept his word!

Jane stood there like a statue; this was too much! She had humiliated herself by waiting; she had waited all this time, and now she stood there decided to offer her hand in reconciliation, ready to give and to receive a last parting word; and this incredible self-mastery of hers had been thus received! What then did this man wish? Did he demand entreaties from her?

Entreaty? At the mere word, the whole nature of this young girl was aroused to resistance and exasperation. To entreat was something she could not do. Miss Forest, who so clearly tested, so calmly considered all, never had occasion to lament a momentary enthusiasm nor to atone for an error, because she never allowed herself to yield to impulse; even in her childhood entreaty was something that had been impossible to her. She had borne every punishment, but it was with an obstinacy which chose to endure for long weeks, rather than allow the word "forgive" to pass her lips; and Forest had discerned in the child too much of his own nature to force her to anything he would himself regard as a humiliation. The thought of entreaty flashed through Jane's soul, only to be repelled with abhorrence. He wished no farewell; well then

he might go without it, into the field, to death, wherever he would.

And what had driven him to this? She knew now; the bitter satisfaction with which he had heralded his ceasing to be any longer "a hero of the pen," had betrayed it to her. That phrase had entered deep into this man's soul; for weeks long it had tortured him; had become the goad which had impelled him on to undertake something to which his strength was not equal; and if he now succumbed, if he perished in the undertaking, whose was the blame?

Jane began to pace excitedly up and down the room; she strove to repel this thought, but ever and ever again it would return. She heard only the words he had spoken in gloomy resignation: "I have no one; I stand alone in the world!" She pressed her hand against her breast, as if that agony had found an echo there.—Perhaps she ought now to confess this to him. The old obstinacy again towered up in all its uncontrollable might, she stamped violently as if beside herself. "No, and no! and forever no!"

CHAPTER XIV.

FAREWELL!

THE afternoon passed in hasty preparations for the departure of

the two soldiers; at last all was arranged, and with the early twilight, Frederic, ready for the journey, betook himself to the doctor and his wife, to say good-by. The poor fellow looked very melancholy; around his broad mouth was a quiver of pain: it was with great difficulty he kept back his tears. Neither the heavy package of money the doctor handed him nor the promise of the doctor's wife to care for him in the field, could console him.

"For shame, Frederic!" said Doctor Stephen, chidingly. "Is that the way to go to war? With such a sorrowful mien, with tearful eyes? I should have believed you had more courage."

Frederic, deeply wounded, wiped the tears from his eyes, and at length, comprehending the full meaning of the reproach, he cried excitedly:

"Do you think, Herr Doctor, that I am afraid? It is a real delight to me to take the musket on my shoulder, and go to war. But my poor master! This is going to cost him his life, even before he meets the enemy."

"Well, that is by no means certain," said the doctor, while Frau Stephen, who was entirely of Frederic's opinion, pressed her handkerchief to her eyes. "Perhaps he will hold out better than we all think. I tell you once more, he is

not so very ill as you imagine, and this soldier-life will tear him away from his studies, which, in any event, is a fortunate thing."

"He will not endure it," persisted Frederic with a mournful shake of the head; "he certainly will not endure it! At the very first march, he will lie in the hospital; and if I am not with him to take care of him, he will surely die. And for all this"—here that fearful, bearish nature, so deplored by Mr. Atkins, broke forth anew in Frederic,—“and for all this, those accursed Frenchmen are guilty,—I—I am going to kill a dozen at least for it!”

"Well, well; wait until you are in France!" cried the doctor, retreating from the furious pantomime Frederic enacted after these words. "You certainly will have to wait before you can offer such a propitiatory sacrifice to the manes of your master. So far as I know, he has served his year in the volunteer army, and he still remains alive."

"That was ten years ago," replied Frederic, still more despairingly. "At that time he was much stronger and more healthy than I, and still he lay for some time in the hospital. Well, there is no help for it now! Good-by, Herr Doctor, good-by, Frau Doctorin!" he cordially stretched out both huge hands, and in spite of his ef-

forts to keep them back, tears streamed down his cheeks. "You have been very kind to me during these last three years; when I return I will try to repay you; if I cannot—may God reward you!"

So saying, he pressed, and shook with a giant's strength, the proffered hands, accepted another caution and some further words of good advice, waved his cap, and trotted down the steps after his master, who had already taken leave of the married pair, and had gone for a few moments into the garden.

The professor stood at the farther end of the garden, leaning against the latticed gate, and gazed fixedly and dreamily upon the now dry portion of the hedge-way which separated it from the river rushing past. The sun had already set, the last beams of the twilight were fading away, and the first stars faintly glimmered in the sky. Between the trees and shrubbery, dusky shadows already lay, and the cool breath of the night enveloped all. From above came the light rustle and murmur of the waves, the dear old familiar Rhine voices whispered to him their parting salutation. Whether it was a parting from home, or from life as well—it was the last he had to expect.

There was all at once a rustle from another direction, but more distinct, more violent, as a woman's

silk dress crossed the path. Thrilled by a presentiment, Fernow turned around. Before him stood Jane, pale as death, her glance fixed upon the ground, her hands firmly clasped, and with an expression as if, just now, the most terrible thing in her whole life had happened. Her breast rose and fell convulsively; her lips quivered; she could not control them, and at last they opened for these momentous words: "I—I beg your forgiveness!"

"Miss Forest! Johanna!" cried Fernow, with uncontrollable emotion; but she had already turned, and like a hunted creature, fled down the path. He was about to rush after her, when Frederic's loud voice echoed through the garden.

"Herr Professor, we must go! Herr Professor, where are you? We haven't a moment to lose."

"Must we go? This very instant!" The new duty was demanding its first heavy sacrifice; a moment of struggle, and then all was over.

"I am coming!" he replied in a firm voice! He hastened to the house. Under the vine-wreathed balcony it was growing dark already, but the outlines of a delicate form were visible, only half concealed by the foliage. For a moment the professor's feet lingered, only one, and ardent and deep-toned the parting word at last wrung from him up to her:

"Farewell!"

CHAPTER XV.

FOLLOWING THE CLUE.

WEEKS and months had passed, since that first call to arms had echoed through the land, and still the storm of war raged with undiminished fury ; but the arrow had recoiled upon its sender. Upon the Rhine the vineyards were ripening, the purple grapes gaining richer hues day by day ; golden harvests moved in the fields ; over the cities floated the nation's victorious banner ; but yonder in France, the vineyards were laid waste, the blooming meadows were trodden under the feet of men and horses, the flames of burning villages rose to heaven. All the horrors which had been destined for the Rhineland, now fell upon French soil, a late but fearful punishment for the once so frivolously devastated Palatinate. Even the victors could no longer restrain their rage ; the ruin, now unfettered, took its course, alike visiting the guilty and the guiltless, and the trembling land now at last itself experienced the full, terrible import of those words with which it had often enough absolved itself from every responsibility—*C'est la guerre !*

Onward, still onward, marched the victorious columns of the German army, from the Rhine to the Moselle, from the Moselle to the

Meuse, from the Meuse to the Seine, throwing down all that stood in its way. City after city opened its gates, citadel after citadel yielded after a shorter or longer resistance. The fiery August sun blazed down upon seven battlefields, saluting at the same time, countless trophies of victory ; and the first cool breezes of September swept that soil, where the wavering enemy, surrounded, hemmed in, pressed on every side, had at last yielded. A whole French corps, the once formidable head of the army, now indeed held the vaunted entrance to Germany ; but without arms or resources ;—and meantime the conquerors pressed on, with restless, unyielding persistence, to the heart of France—to Paris !

At N., the capital of one of the departments, in spite of the war-billows that had long since swept over it, reigned an active, military life. This town was the principal station on the great military and travelling highway which led from Germany into the interior of France. Marching regiments, endless provision and munition trains, here crossed the path of the returning transports of sick and wounded soldiers, ambulances, and couriers ; all the streets were crammed with men, carriages and horses ; all the quarters were full to overflowing. In this state of things, two travellers, apparently English or Ameri-

can, who had arrived yesterday, although they undoubtedly belonged to the richer class, still deemed it a lucky accident to obtain, at an extravagant price, a pair of miserably-furnished attic rooms in a hotel of the second grade.

Upon the morning after their arrival, the stronger gentleman sat upon a sofa, while his young companion stood at an open window and gazed up the street, where a confused multitude of pedestrians and vehicles of all sorts blocked the way, while the tumult and excitement, in ever-increasing murmurs, fell upon her ear.

"I do not comprehend how you can endure those deafening noises down there, Miss Jane! Are you not at least weary of this eternal hurrying and surging to and fro?"

"No!" was the curt, somewhat ill-natured answer of the young lady, who, bending far out of the window, at this moment was gazing intently into an ambulance full of wounded men. Her glance fixed itself immovably on the pale wan faces, and she looked after them until the ambulance vanished around a corner.

"Well, you have better nerves than I," said Atkins resignedly. "I confess that during these last eight days I have become really morbid. We were a whole week on this journey to N. which is usually made in twenty-four hours; we

have had our night quarters in the most wretched villages, such food I never in my life tasted before. For hours and days, we have had to lie over in half-ruined places on account of broken bridges and impassable roads, and always in danger lest a battle might be fought in our immediate vicinity, and we borne onward with the wave of victory or flight. I should think all this must at last have convinced you how impossible it is to trace out family relationships upon the theatre of war."

During this speech, Jane had closed the window; she now turned around. "Impossible?" she asked calmly. "I thought that in spite of all, we had arrived in N., and that, in any event, a decision awaited us here."

"Or a new deception! This clue misleads us in the most exasperating ways. Scarce do we think we have it, when it suddenly snaps asunder, and darts away to some other quarter of the heavens. At present, we are in France, and I should not wonder if the next thing, we had to direct our course back to America, only to go from there to the Rhine again, and so on."

"It is all the same!" declared Jane energetically. "I promised my father to find my brother if still alive, and to yield only to impossibilities. I shall keep my word!"

"If it were only a direct clue we are following?" began Atkins again; "but whom do we seek? A man who by some remote possibility *may* be able to give us information of the principal character in this drama."

"And perhaps the only one who can give it! The direct clue is lost; that clergyman is not to be found, neither in his former parish nor anywhere else; all our efforts in this direction have failed; but we have found the artisan who adopted the other boy."

"And from him have received the joyful tidings that his nephew went to France four years ago, and at this moment may be here in N. For the theatre of his highly respectable efforts at the planing bench, he has chosen a place right in the midst of all these accursed military operations."

Jane's eyes flashed half-angrily. "You forget the most important thing," she said, "the one which alone leads us here; the assertion of that man that the former play-fellow of this young Erdmann is still living, that the two, after a separation of years, met again during their term of military service. Certainly, he could tell us nothing further; his nephew was at that time on duty far away from him in a large garrison city; but this much he remembered distinctly, having heard it from Erdmann's own lips.

I have learned that my brother still lives, that there is some one in the world who knows him, who can tell me his abode. Does this not seem to you a step gained on the path we seek? It is more than I had hoped!"

"I do not dispute all this," replied Atkins; "I am only of the opinion that it would be better to defer our investigations until after the end of the war."

"Until the end of the war," echoed Jane. "When all present associations are severed, and the soldiers are scattered here and there! These tidings have not come too late; I hope not, at least, but we ought not to delay a moment, to make the best possible use of them, and as an epistolary correspondence was not to be thought of, there was only one resource; I must enter personally into the investigation, and follow the clue. If you suffer from the dangers and deprivations of the journey, Mr. Atkins, it is your own fault—I could have come alone!"

"Yes, God knows you would have done so!" said Atkins, with a sigh. "Jane, you are sometimes terrible in your restless energy! I certainly do not belong to the indolent and the irresolute; but this tireless rushing onward toward one single goal, has at last quite exhausted me."

"But not *me*!" replied Jane,

with cool determination. "I am resolved to go on, I repeat it, to the utmost limits of the possible!"

"Well, we have one certainty at least," began Atkins after a brief pause; "the German master with whom young Erdmann was at work when the war broke out, is still here. You know that yesterday, I went from the mayoralty, where I received this intelligence, directly to the designated house. But I found it closed, all its inmates fled to the just arrived Prussian regiments, among whom they hoped to find countrymen. This information I obtained from a very peculiar conversation with an exceedingly talkative neighbor; peculiar, I may well say, for she understood no English and I no French, and we were forced to call a very expressive pantomime to our aid, by means of which I made her comprehend that my visit was designed for Monsieur Erdmann and his master, that I would return to-day, and that I should be infinitely obliged to her if she would hand my card to the latter. Thus far our pantomime brought us, and now I am curious to know what sort of unavoidable confusion Madame has made out of the slang."

Jane glanced at her watch. "It is now half-past nine, and I think we ought to get ready to go out."

CHAPTER XVI.

AN AGONIZING DOUBT.

The answer which Atkins was about to give, was interrupted by a knocking at the door. It was opened, and an old man with white hair, simply but not poorly clad, and with a modest, friendly manner, entered, and immediately addressed himself in good French to the two strangers.

"I beg your pardon, but they showed me up here. I am the master joiner Vogt, Rue de—. A strange gentleman inquired for me yesterday, and left a card with his address which I understood as a request for me to call on him. I trust I have come to the right place?"

Atkins naturally understood nothing of these words. But Jane, who was perfect mistress of French, translated all he needed to hear, and then turned to the visitor.

"You are quite right, but the gentleman's visit was not to you, it was to a young man who, they tell us, works with you. He is in any event, a German, and a journeyman carpenter, Franz Erdmann. We are in search of him, and were just about visiting you again on his account."

"Is it Franz you seek?" asked, the old man, now in his mother tongue. "Good heavens! he has been gone six weeks. Immediate-

ly after the declaration of war he went from us back to Germany. He is now in the Prussian army."

Jane involuntarily grew pale. Another vain effort! But the disappointment which, after so confident a hope, would have discouraged any other, only angered her. She compressed her lips and the toe of her little boot beat the floor. If this experience lent her no words, it was evident that in her heart she made a new vow to press forward in spite of all.

Mr. Atkins did not take the tidings so quietly; his vexation found vent in loud exclamations.

"In the army; I believe this glorious Prussian host embraces all mankind! Whatever person we enquire after in the course of our investigations we always receive the stereotyped answer, *In the army!* I am convinced that if at last we get upon the direct track of this Mr. Franz, we shall learn that he too, is in the army. If he is in no other part of Europe, we shall certainly find him there."

The master-joiner understood none of this English, but he heard the tone of the words, and saw from the expression of the young lady's face, what an effect his arrival had produced upon both.

"Yes, and this war comes near enough to us also!" he said sadly. "I miss Franz everywhere, and my poor girl sits weeping her eyes

out the whole day long; they were to be married in the autumn. But there was no help for it; he belonged to the first levies, and we would not take upon ourselves the sin of holding him back."

"*Sin!*" growled Atkins, again in his English, and turned to Jane. "Did you ever hear of such a thing? This fellow sits safe and concealed here in France, where no man asks after his military duty. He was to marry here, settle down here, and the prospect was that he would not during all his life, return to Germany; and scarce does the war break out when he runs home, leaves bride, wedding, handicraft, all in the lurch, and hurries off to let himself be shot dead for the beloved Rhine. The sentiment of duty with these Germans is really a sort of mania."

Jane scarce heard these words; a ray of hope already flashed before her eyes here, where Atkins had given up all for lost. She turned hastily again to the master-joiner.

"Young Hartman stood in intimate relations to your family? He was to be your son-in-law? Well, then, perhaps you and your daughter know something in regard to his past which may be very important to us. We hope to gain from him some intelligence as to a family matter, and shall very cheerfully requite any such service."

"As to his family relations, I

know them intimately. He has been more than two years in my house, and he fell in love with my Marie at the very first," said Vogt unhesitatingly. "Ask on, Made-moiselle, I think I can give you information."

Atkins drew back. He saw that Jane wished to take the affair into her own hands, and he resigned it to her the more readily, as he promised himself no especial result from the pending examination. Indeed no help was necessary; Miss Forest propounded her questions so clearly, so confidently and energetically, that the best criminal lawyer could have done no better.

"Your future son-in-law was born in the little fishing village of M., not far from Hamburg?"

Master Vogt nodded.

"After the death of his parents, he came to relatives in P., who brought him up, and from thence, after his apprenticeship and military service were ended, he went over to France to perfect himself in the joiner's art, and for two years, he has lived at N., in your house?"

"Quite right!" returned the master. "It is really our Franz you describe. All agrees to a hair!"

"Has he never?"—Jane's voice again betrayed the excitement she could with difficulty restrain—"has he never told you of a brother who grew up with him in M.!"

"That he has indeed! But he was no real brother, only an adopted child whom his parents had brought with them from Hamburg, and kept, in their kindness of heart, as no one claimed him."

Jane sent a triumphant glance over to Atkins. In spite of all, she was on the track. "And this also is known to you? Later the boys were separated, but the other also found adoption?"

"Yes, with a learned man."

With an almost convulsive movement, Jane lifted her head. "With—a learned man!" she repeated slowly; they told us it was a clergyman, pastor Hartwigs."

"Yes, you are quite right; he was a very learned old gentleman, with his head always stuck into books; Franz has told us all about him; later, he gave up his pastorate—he was not poor—just to live for his learning."

Jane had all at once become pale as death. A lightning ray had flashed down and rent the darkness which had so long lain over the destiny of her brother; for a moment it glowed lurid and threatening, then all was again night; but its upflowing must have shown something terrible to the sister, for she shuddered before it.

"Are you ill, Miss Jane?" asked Atkins, anxiously, and made a movement to approach her.

"No!" Jane summoned all her

strength, and motioned him back ; her breath came short and violently, and the hand with which she held for support to the table, trembled as if in a fever.

"And do you know whether that adopted brother is still alive, whether he stands in any sort of relationship to your son-in-law?"

"Certainly he is alive," said the master-joiner calmly. "And they have often written to each other. No longer ago than last Easter, Franz had a letter from him."

"From what place? Where was it dated?" Fearful excitement pulsed through Jane's voice; her glance was fixed upon the man as if life or death for her lay in his answer.

Master Vogt shook his head. "That I cannot tell you. Franz spoke of the letter, and told us that his brother was doing well, but he always called him by his given name, Fritz, and neither my daughter nor I saw the writing. The only thing I know is that he came from the Rhine."

From the Rhine! Jane laid her hand against her moist, icy-cold forehead. For a moment, it seemed to her as if she must swoon away, and all else with her; but she kept up, and remained so dumb and motionless, that both men thought her apathetic.

Atkins glanced over to her in surprise; he waited for her to ask

further questions, waited for a full, minute; but as she was still silent he began to speak.

"This being the case, we might have spared ourselves a difficult journey! We have just come from the Rhine, my best Monsieur Vogt. You can give us neither name nor place? Neither you nor your daughter?"

"Neither."

"Well, then, I must beg you to tell me the exact regiment and company in which your future son-in-law serves at present. You have received tidings of him since he left for the war?"

"Only once! We were hoping he would pass through here with the army, and yesterday, when we learned that the new Prussian regiments were entering the town, we all ran out and stood before the gates to see if his was not there."

Atkins still waited for Jane to take part in the conversation; her entire indifference seemed so strange after the feverish interest she had shown a few minutes before; but, as she persisted in her immobility, he drew forth his note-book, and jotted down the statement just given. The master-joiner took his leave of the young lady; she bowed mechanically, and left it to her companion to dismiss him with great politeness. The man might perhaps be again

needed in this business, and any one whom Mr. Atkins thought of making use of always enjoyed the politest attention from him.

When the man was gone, he turned to Jane. "Did I not tell you so? We must go to another point of the compass? Now we will direct our steps back to the Rhine. The only thing which remains to us is to write from Germany to Herr Erdmann; in any event this is easier than a correspondence with N., since we have his full address. In case he is no longer alive, we must repeat our advertisement in the several Rhenish newspapers. But in any event, I think we should immediately start upon our return journey."

At these words, Jane started from her stupor.

"And why? We are now in France. Perhaps we may succeed in finding that regiment!"

"For Heaven's sake, Jane, what are you thinking of? Seek a regiment upon the march—what an idea!"

"But that matters not, I will now know the truth! And if it was to cost me my life, and I must rush into the fight, even into the line of battle,—I must have a certainty!"

Atkins stood almost horrified before this sudden outbreak of a passion he had never suspected in

Jane; and he now for the first time remarked her deathly pallor.

"Good God, what is the matter with you! Are you ill? I thought you would have to suffer from the weariness and excitement of this journey."

He sought to assist her, but she repelled him with a passionate gesture.

"It will pass over—I need nothing—but I beg you for a glass of water."

Atkins was in serious anxiety; he knew that Jane was not at all subject to nervous attacks, and he feared that she was ill. As in the hotel at present, prompt service was not to be dreamt of, he himself hastened out to fetch the water.

This was what Jane had expected. She wanted no water, but she needed a moment of solitude to save her from suffocation. Scarce was he gone, when she, too, hastened to the door, drew the bolt, and then sinking on her knees by the sofa, she buried her face in her hands. Jane Forest would not yield in this way before stranger eyes!

"If one is thrust out into life, without parents and without home, and then falls into the hands of a learned man who knows and loves nothing in the wide world but science—" and that letter came from the Rhine! This had been the lightning stroke which had pass-

ed through her; the presentiment came with all the annihilating power of certainty. That lightning flash had opened an abyss before her, into which Jane did not dare to glance; it had brought a secret to light, of which the cold, proud betrothed of Alison had not before been conscious. But, as now in mortal anguish she wrung her uplifted hands, it broke forth in one long-repressed despairing-cry;—

“Almighty God, only not this! My rival, my deadly enemy, if it must be, I will bear it—only not my brother!”



CHAPTER XVII.

THE PEN AND THE SWORD.

THE late afternoon sun of a bright September day shone through the thick-leaved boughs of the ancient gigantic chestnuts which shaded the avenues and grass-plats of the broad park stretching behind the castle of S., one of those magnificently situated country seats in which the interior of France is so rich. This castle, on the western declivity of a precipitous range of hills, which at this point unfolded all their widely-romantic beauty, as well as the village in its immediate vicinity, had just been seized as quarters for the soldiery. A Rhen-

ish landwehr regiment, after having taken part in all the August battles had been ordered back here to protect the mountain region from roving bands of French fusileers, and to keep the passes free. It was a dangerous and arduous post for the rather small detachment, which, many miles distant from its comrades, almost daily undertook excursions to the mountains, thereby placing itself in constant danger of an attack for which this region was only too favorable. The soldiery lay in the village, while the officers had quartered themselves close by in the castle, whose inmates had naturally fled. These gentlemen, for the moment at least, seemed to have surrendered themselves to an idleness of late only rarely offered them; from the terrace echoed loud talking and laughing, blended with the ringing of glasses.

At the entrance of the park, under one of these giant chestnuts, lay a landwehr officer stretched upon the tall grass, and gazing up into the thick leafy roof through which the setting sun threw hither and thither its palpitating rays. The floral treasures of the garden, arranged with great art and care, and now resplendent with all the summer's magnificence and luxuriance, appeared to fetter his attention just as little as the sound of his comrades' merriment coming down to him from the castle. He

raised his head only when an approaching footstep startled him from his dream.

A man of about thirty years, his uniform and the bands upon his arm designating him as a surgeon, came up the path as if in search of some one, and halted before the reclining officer.

"I thought as much! Here you lie dreaming again, while I, by the sweat of my brow, am winning popularity for you. You really do not concern yourself about it in the least!"

The man addressed half rose and supported himself on his elbows. "I have a duty to perform," he said. "I must go down to the village at four o'clock."

"And for that reason you must make yourself invisible at three? Do not deny it, Walter, you ran away from us because you remarked that I had the horrible intention of reading aloud a poem, a copy of which I forced from you. But flight does not avail you; on your return, you will be received with general acclamation. Our major swears that he never heard anything like it his life; the adjutant was just as enthusiastic in its praise. You know he is a sort of amateur critic, well versed in æsthetics, and from the very first you wonderfully impressed him with your learning. He reminds us how highly favored we are by destiny in being able to

call a poet our companion-in-arms. a poet Germany will one day salute as its greatest genius. Our lieutenant swears by all the gods of the upper and lower world, that if the French had possessed a bard who before the battle had inspired them with such songs, they would have given us more to do; but your poetry has had the most stupendous effect upon our fat captain; it has made him forget his dram!"

"Stop this nonsense!" said the young officer half in anger, as he sank back to his reclining posture.

"*Nonsense!* I give you my word that I have only repeated literally to you, what was said. Did you hear the glasses ring? All the officers were just then solemnly guaranteeing you immortality. I am sent to seize the flying singer, and bring him back, living or dead. They clamorously demand your presence."

"Spare me! You know how much I dislike such ovations."

"And again do you refuse to come? Well, it is just like you! We ought by this time to have learned that we can have Lieutenant Fernow's company only when some service is required, or some fight is at hand. You run away from all recognition of your talents, as any other man would run from punishment. You must cease this, Walter; it really is not fitting for the future poet of Germany."

Fernow had meantime risen; he had put on the helmet which lay near him in the grass, and bound his sword more firmly. One who two months ago had seen the learned professor of the university of B. would certainly not have recognized him in this young warrior, whose military coat fitted the slender form excellently, as if he had all his life worn no other. The sickly pallor and the deep, shadowy rings about the eyes, had vanished with the bowed form and the unhealthy appearance. The forehead and cheeks were deeply sunburned, the blood coursed vigorously through the veins, the blonde hair, little cared for, waved in luxuriant profusion under the helmet; the once smooth chin wore a heavy beard; the upright military bearing seemed to cost the present landwehr lieutenant not the slightest effort, and the once delicate hands, with a strong grip, now seized the sword. These six weeks in the field had wrought wonders; it was evident at the first glance—Doctor Stephen's radical cure had been affected.

"You place too much value on my songs," he said evasively. "The verses, written upon the inspiration of the moment, inspire only for the moment, and when the excitement which called them forth is ended, they will fall into forgetfulness."

"Do you think so?" asked the

surgeon gravely. "I may be allowed to doubt it. In your verses resounds more than a mere battle-cry, although you may, perhaps, in future, thank the war for having roused your slumbering talent and for showing you the path to future renown."

"Perhaps!" said Fernow gloomily. "And perhaps, also, a bullet may to-day or to-morrow make an end of all the promised renown?"

"Can you not throw off this eternal melancholy?" asked the doctor chidingly. "Walter, I really believe you are bearing an unhappy love around with you."

"Not at all!" cried Fernow passionately, and turned away. The deep flush which earlier had suffused his pale face at every violent excitement, again appeared, although less visible in the bronzed countenance.

This sudden emotion had escaped the surgeon. He had been a younger colleague of Doctor Stephen, a private tutor in the university of B. He and Fernow had known each other sufficiently to exchange a passing salutation as they met. This had lasted for three years, but the army life had in a few hours made them acquaintances, and in a few weeks, friends.

The always merry young doctor laughed aloud at his own comic idea. "I have really been very curious as to the where and when"

Since we have been in the field, I have scarcely stirred from your side, and in B. you never so much as looked at a woman, for which reason, the fairer half of the city, with good reason, declared you outlawed and proscribed." Fernow made no answer; he busied himself with the hilt of his sword.

"But Doctor Stephen was right with his diagnosis," continued the surgeon after a momentary pause, "although I would not believe it when he came over to H. to commend you to my care, he having heard that I was assigned to your regiment. I could with a good conscience, promise to do my best, for I was convinced that you would be the first patient to fall into my hands. The first week, I would not have given a penny for your life, but when the marches and hardships began, when our men fell in scores beneath the fiery August sun, and you still held out; when amid all the over exertion and deprivation which sometimes lay low the strongest, you grew only healthier and more robust then I took off my hat to the superior discernment of my old colleague. Walter, you have one of the best constitutions, a really magnificent constitution, which only needed to renounce the study and the writing-desk, to gain its full development; and you have found

the right, although somewhat unusual remedy for your nerves. The thunder of the cannon has thoroughly re-established them! This will be a surprise to everyone when you return to B."

"When I return?"

"Forever and eternally, these presentiments of death!" cried the surgeon, with an impatient gesture. "You cling to them with a genuine passion."

"Because I feel them!"

"Nonsense! If there is a man bullet-proof it is you! Do not take it ill of me, Walter, but your rushing to the front in all these battles, borders on insanity. Courage need not become reckless; but where excitement urges you on, you see and hear nothing. Your comrades all say this."

"And still there is not one among them, who a little while ago, would have owned that I possessed any courage at all," returned Fernow, with some bitterness.

"I know that," said the surgeon, frankly. "But to tell the truth you used to have little enough of the hero in you. You were entirely a man of the pen, who wholly absorbed in his books had nothing to do with the outside world. Now that is all a thing of the past, as well as the error of your comrades. Since the first battle, none doubt your courage."

Fernow smiled sadly. His eyes

alone had not changed. There lay within them the old dreaminess and the old sadness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RIVAL LOVERS.

At the entrance of the park a heavy tread became audible, and a giant form loomed up behind the latticed gate. Frederic's huge figure well became his uniform, and he seemed to be aware of this, for there was an inconcealable self-esteem in the rigid military bearing, with which he approached both gentlemen.

"Herr Lieutenant, I come to announce to you that down in the city a carriage has just arrived with some English people, who wish to pass through our lines to the mountains."

Fernow turned quickly, revery and melancholy had all at once vanished; he was now every inch a soldier. "That is impossible!" he said. "No one must pass."

"So the Englishman has been told; but he will not submit. He has papers," he says, "and wishes to speak with the Major or the Lieutenant who is upon duty."

Fernow glanced at his watch. "Very well," he said, "I will come; I must, in any event, now go to the

village. It is a very unpleasant duty," he added, turning to the surgeon, "I must send back harmless travellers whom perhaps important business urges forward, but the orders are strict and cannot be evaded."

"Unpleasant, do you call it?" laughed the surgeon. "It gives me great satisfaction to show these arrogant sons of Albion who, with their impudence and blasé manners, spread themselves over our whole Rhine country, who is lord and master here. In their own land, unfortunately, we have never ventured it."

"Are you going with me to the village!"

"No, I am going back to the castle. I leave you alone to manage your Englishmen and your triumph; for the latter that priggish volunteer, that E., has already cared. He snatched your poem from me to read to his comrades. And listen, Walter, when you have gone your rounds, come for half an hour at least, to our quarters. You are falling past rescue in the esteem of our captain, who alone refuses to recognize in you a future celebrity,—you do not drink enough for him."

With a laughing adieu, the surgeon returned to the castle, while Fernow started for the village. Frederic stamped on behind not taking his eyes for a moment from his master. But these eyes had an

entirely changed expression. Once they had gazed at the professor, only with the anxiety one shows in guarding a sick, helpless child that may easily come to harm; now there lay a silent awe, a boundless admiration in the glance which followed the slightest motion of the "Lieutenant." The devotion of the faithful servant had withstood more than a fiery trial; it had become proverbial in the company.

At the entrance of the village, before an inn, halted two carriages which had arrived, one after the other. The first, which had come a quarter of an hour soonest, had been first ordered back, but its occupants would not submit to the necessity imposed upon them. Unfortunately, he understood no German, the soldiers no English, and they were obliged to carry on their conversation in the most execrable French — a very difficult and tedious proceeding. But the stranger, who resorted to his papers, had at last succeeded in obtaining a promise that his case should be laid before the proper officer, and still excited by the conversation, with grim forehead and contracted eyebrows, he had just entered the door of the inn, when the second carriage drove up. A gentleman stepped from it and approached the house. The eyes of the two met, and an expression of surprise broke

at the same moment from the lips of each.

"Mr. Atkins!"

"Henry!"

"How come you here?" asked Alison, who was first to recover from his astonishment.

"I came from N. And you?"

"Direct from Paris! I dared not remain there longer, the investment began to grow serious. But I have been detained here; they will not allow me to continue my journey."

"And they will not allow us to pass."

"*Us!*" repeated Alison slowly.

"Are you not alone?" And as it startled by a sudden idea, he added hastily: "I cannot hope to find Miss Forest in your company?"

"Yes, she comes with me."

Alison was about to rush to the carriage, but he forebore. Was he abashed at the involuntary movement, or was it the remembrance of their last meeting, that all at once allayed his excitement? Enough, he controlled his emotion, and with a calmness all too indifferent to be natural, he turned again to Atkins.

"And how came you, and above all Miss Forest, here at the theatre of war?"

Atkins had foreseen the question, and was prepared. "How? Well, we wished for an inside view of the war; but in a week's time

we have become weary enough of it and as you see, are now upon our return home. Doctor and Mrs. Stephen will be triumphant; they were beside themselves at what they called Miss Jane's eccentricities and my compliance."

A cold mocking smile played around Alison's lips. "But I am not so credulous as Doctor and Mrs. Stephen. This excuse may satisfy them, but I know Miss Jane too well to suppose her guilty of so aimless and romantic a thirst for adventure. She would be the last to undertake such a journey, and she would hardly have found in you so obsequious an escort."

Atkins bit his lips. He might have foreseen the answer.

"Will you have the kindness to explain to me the reason of Miss Forest's coming here?" asked Alison, even more sharply than before.

"Ask her yourself!" cried Atkins angrily. He thought it best to throw the entire responsibility upon Jane rather than betray any of her motives.

"I will do so!" replied Henry morosely, and stepped to the carriage.

His appearance had by this time ceased to be a surprise to Jane; she had seen him leave the house and enter into conversation with Atkins. She at once gained complete mastery over herself. Whatever might

have passed through her soul during these last momentous hours. Mr. Alison saw only a perfectly immovable face, upon which was no trace of anxiety or passion. She had again enveloped herself in that icy dignity which had made her so unapproachable in B., and this ice now froze Henry as he stepped to the carriage to greet her. This manner decided Alison's whole bearing. He could in a case of necessity, enforce a right; but he was too proud to betray an affection in the face of such coldness.

With chilling politeness, he lifted her from the carriage, offered her his arm, and conducted her to a bench before the inn, while in a few words he informed her and Atkins that the matter in dispute had been referred to the proper officer, and he hoped that after an examination of their papers, no further hindrance would be placed in the way of their journey.

Atkins seemed to be of the same opinion; he went back to the carriage to give the driver some directions, leaving the two alone.

Jane had thrown herself down upon the bench; she knew that an explanation of her presence here would be demanded. Was she inclined to give it? It did not appear that she was.

Henry showed no haste to question her, he only gazed searchingly into her face; but it was in vain;

she remained calm beneath his glance.

"It was a great surprise to me to find you here, Jane!" he began at last.

"And your coming was one to me. I expected no such meeting."

"Under the circumstances, my return was to be expected, I intended to go directly to B. where I certainly hoped to find you; but the place seems to possess small attractions for you."

In spite of the sharp scrutiny of his manner, it still betrayed an involuntary satisfaction; although Miss Forest gave him no explanation, he would far rather see her here in the midst of this tumult of war and exposed to its dangers, than safe at home with her relations in B.

Jane was spared an answer, for at this moment, Atkins returned; Henry frowned, but did not seem inclined to speak upon this subject in the presence of a third person. For some minutes there was an uncomfortable silence in the little group; further questions over the where and when were in the minds of all, and yet each avoided uttering them. Atkins at last began to converse on another subject.

"And what say you of the events which have taken place since we parted? Had you ever dreamed them possible?"

"No!" was the short, morose

answer. "I was quite of the contrary opinion."

"And so was I! We judged wrongly, as it appears! This is the tame, patient, unpractical nation of thinkers! But I always said that in every one of these Germans lay hidden something of the bearish nature, and this seems now to have broken out all at once, among the whole people. It is no longer a struggle with changing fortunes; they throw down and crush all that comes in their way. An unblest success!"

"But we are not at the end yet," said Alison coldly. The Emperor's mercenary hordes are beaten, but the republic summon the whole land to arms; nation now stands arrayed against nation. We shall yet see if the German bear does not at last find his master!"

"I wish he would find him!" growled Atkins surlily. "I wish he could be driven back over his Rhine, so that the intoxication and pride of victory might for all time be taken from him, and he again learn to dance tamely and patiently as when—"

The American got no further in his pious wishes for the future weal of Germany. Jane had suddenly risen, and stood erect and tall before him; her eyes flamed down upon the little man as if she would annihilate him.

"You quite forgot Mr. Atkins,

that I too am a German by birth, and the child of German parents," she said.

Atkins stood there as if thunder-struck. "*You, Miss Jane?*" he asked, scarce believing his ears.

"Yes, *I!* and I will not hear my fatherland spoken of in this way. Keep your revilings and your hopes for Mr. Alison's ears; he shares your wishes; but do not utter them in my presence; I will bear it no longer!"

And throwing back her head with a gesture of lofty scorn, she turned away from the two men, and vanished inside the door of the house.

"What was that?" asked Alison, after a momentary pause.

Atkins seemed just to have recovered from the consternation into which this scene had thrown him. "That was the father once again! Mr. Forest just as he lived and moved! That was the very tone, the very glance with which he so imperiously felled down all that opposed him! I have never before encountered this in Jane; have you, Henry?"

Alison was silent; his eyes, with a consuming glow, had rested upon Jane during the whole time she had stood before Atkins; they now seemed fixed upon the place where she had vanished, and there was far, very far more of admiration than of anger in their glance.

"I thought Mr. Forest hated his fatherland," he said at last, slowly, "and that he educated his daughter in that hatred."

"Oh, yes, he quarrelled with Germany his whole life long, and in his dying hour, like a despairing man, clung to its remembrance. We never thoroughly learn to know this people, Henry! I was for twenty years in Forest's house, I shared sorrow and joy with him, I knew his most secret affairs; and still, forever and eternally, one thing lay between us, this one which the most bitter experiences, the most energetic will, which the associations of twenty years could not banish from the father's heart, and which now bursts its barriers in the daughter who has inherited all this, whose education is American through and through:—this German blood!"

They were interrupted. The officer they had been expecting now appeared in the village street, accompanied by a soldier. Henry advanced some steps to meet him, and saluted him politely; then summoning all his bad French he began to explain his embarrassments; but after the first hasty words, he spoke more slowly, then stopped, began anew, and stopped again, and at last was wholly silent; his eyes fixed, staring, and immovable, upon the face of the officer.

He too was equally surprised;

he stepped back a few paces, but in so doing, he had also approached Mr. Atkins, who now, with an expression of mingled surprise and terror, cried :

“Professor Fernow !”

Henry trembled; this outcry gave him a certainty as to whose eyes they were which had beamed upon him from under the helmet. Every drop of blood vanished from the face of the young American; with one single glance he took in the whole appearance of the officer standing before him; a second flew back to the house where Jane still lingered. He seemed to comprehend something. A wild half-suppressed “*Ah!*” broke from his lips, then he set his teeth firmly, and was silent. Atkins had meantime saluted Lieutenant Fernow, who with calm politeness now turned to both gentlemen.

“I regret that it must be I who announce to you unpleasant tidings; but the desired continuation of your journey is impossible. No one can pass; the guards have strict orders to make everyone turn back, whoever he may be.”

“But, Professor Fernow, we must go on!” said Atkins in vexation, “and you know us well enough to assure the authorities that we are not spies.”

“It is impossible to make any exceptions. I am sorry, Mr. Atkins, but the passes are guarded, and no

civilian is allowed to pass from this side into the mountain region. It is possible the order may be recalled to-morrow, as we are expecting re-inforcements; but to-day, it stands in full force.”

“Well, then, you will at least have the goodness to inform us where, according to your august decision, we are to pass the night. We cannot go back; the several places through which we have passed are thronged with soldiers, and we are not allowed to go forward; here in the village we can scarce count upon entertainment. Are we to camp in our carriages?”

“That will not be necessary. You are—alone?”

There should have been no question in these words; the answer was self-evident; still there lay in them an unconscious hesitation.

Atkins was about to answer, but Alison cut short his reply. He had made his conclusion.

“Yes,” he said very emphatically.

“Then I think I can offer you the hospitality of my comrades. We have room enough in the castle, and our acquaintanceship,” here a smile flitted over his face, “guards you from every possible suspicion. Excuse me just for a moment.”

He stepped to the guard standing near, and exchanged a word with him.

“And this is the former profes-

sor of B. University!" muttered Atkins with suppressed anger. "The bookworm has such a military bearing, one would think he had all his life carried a sword at his side; and there is not the least trace of the consumption to be seen about him now."

"But for God's sake, Henry, explain to me what you are telling that falsehood for—"

"Silence!" interrupted Alison in a low, passionate voice. "No word to him of the presence of Miss Forest, not a syllable! I will be back in a moment."

He vanished in the house; Atkins gazed after him shaking his head.

Now it was Alison who was becoming incomprehensible.

Fernow had meantime returned. "Has your young countryman left us?" he asked after a hasty glance around.

"He will return directly," said Atkins, and in fact, Henry now stepped out of the doorway. Jane was leaning on his arm, and he was talking to her so excitedly and persistently, that she did not notice the figure of the young officer who stood with his back to her, until she was close to him. Then Fernow turned around.

For a moment, the two stood opposite each other, in silent, breathless astonishment. But then as it were the brightest sunshine over-

spread Walter's face; his blue eyes gleamed with a passionate ardor, and lighted up with an infinite happiness; the whole nature of this man seemed all aglow with one mighty emotion;—the moment of reunion had betrayed all.

But other emotions were mirrored in Jane's eyes. She shrank back affrighted and deathly pale, and would have fallen, if Alison had not supported her. His arm held hers in an iron grasp, he pressed this arm against his breast, firmly and convulsively, but she felt it not. His eyes fastened themselves penetratingly upon both, not even the quiver of an eyelash escaped him, and a terrible expression, icy and of evil omen, lay upon his face. He needed no word, no declaration—he knew enough.

Fernow was first to recover his self-possession. He had looked only at Jane, not at Alison; he saw her alone.

"Miss Forest, I did not dream that I should also meet *you* here!" he said.

At the first tones of his voice, Henry felt from the contact of the hand resting upon his arm that Jane trembled from head to foot; he let the hand slowly fall, and this movement restored her equanimity.

"Professor Fernow—indeed—we supposed your regiment was already on the way to Paris."

The tone was abrupt and cold, and her glance shunned his; Jane knew that if she now met those eyes, all was lost.

The sunshine vanished from Walter's face; his eyes fell, and the old melancholy again returned. "We were ordered back to guard the passes," he said. His glance still sought hers, but always in vain.

"And so the repulsion we have met came from you? It must be your duty, Professor Fernow, and we submit." And with the last remnant of strength that was left her, Jane turned away from him and went back to Mr. Atkins.

Fernow's lips quivered. This was again the cold, unapproachable Miss Forest, and that moment of separation, which waking or dreaming, had never left his soul, which in all these storms and dangers, he had carried ever with him; even that moment was forgotten, vanished from her remembrance; she shrank from his glance as from something inimical, hated. That evening upon the Ruenberg again arose before him, and now as then, pride conquered bitterness. He turned away.

"Frederic!"

"Herr Lieutenant!"

"You will conduct this lady and these two gentlemen to the castle, to the Surgeon. Mr. Atkins will explain all to him, and he will com-

municate further with the major. Mr. Atkins, you know Doct. Behrënd of B. I must confide you to his care; my duties for the present detain me in the village; I therefore beg you to excuse me."

Touching his military cap, he bade his adieux with a salutation designed for all three, and then strode hastily past the house to the meadow where the first outposts stood.

It was with a feeling of infinite satisfaction that Frederic placed himself at the head of the American trio, to conduct them to the castle. Of the conversation, which had been carried on in English, he had naturally understood nothing, and was therefore firmly convinced the hated individuals consigned to him by his lieutenant, were spies or traitors, upon whose secure keeping the salvation of the whole regiment hung. Proud and triumphant at the mission intrusted to him, with the most rigid military bearing, with head erect, he strode on, ready at the least effort at flight, to make use of his musket.

Happily, the Americans undertook nothing of the kind. The young pair went silently on ahead, without exchanging even a word; but Mr. Atkins, giving the escort a side glance, said sarcastically:

"See here, Mr. Frederic, for good or ill we are now entirely in your hands."

Frederic with immense self-importance looked down upon the little man; now indeed he was lord and master, but his mood became somewhat more gentle as he saw that the haughty American so perfectly understood his position.

"My lieutenant has ordered it!" he said emphatically; "and where my lieutenant is concerned, nothing happens wrong."

"You take a burden from my heart," said Atkins mockingly. "I am infinitely obliged to you for the gratifying intelligence that we are neither to be thrown into a dungeon nor bound in chains; but my best Mr. Frederic, this metamorphose of your lieutenant borders on the fabulous. The professor has become a military hero from head to foot. His learned Eminence now understands, as it seems, excellently how to command, and already in six weeks, has learned to throw out orders about posts, and arrangements and comrades, as if he had grown up in the field, instead of in the study. What has his Highness done then with his former timidity and absent-mindedness?"

"Left it in B.," returned Frederic dryly, "with his books!"

At this answer, Atkins gazed at Frederic in utter astonishment.—"Has the fellow really become intelligent!" he muttered. "Nothing now can happen after this!"

The vaunted intelligence was soon enough to have a trial. Ten minutes later, Frederic appeared on the terrace, where, with the exception of the major, who at this moment was in the castle, the other officers were sitting together. He marched right up to the surgeon. I come from Herr Lieutenant Fernow! He sends you three spies, and wishes you to consult further with the major."

"Are you mad?" cried the surgeon with a loud laugh. "What am I to do with the spies? Are they wounded?"

"No, they are all three sound and healthy."

"Frederic, this is only another of your stupid freaks!" said the captain, thoughtfully draining his glass. "To the major, the lieutenant must have said."

"He said I must take them to the doctor," persisted Frederic, "because he comes from B. The niece of Doctor Stephen, the American Miss, is one of them."

"Miss Forest!" cried the surgeon, starting up. "Heaven and earth! Then Walter has a supreme happiness. Destiny now brings him the prize of war, and he cares nothing for it at all; sends the lady up here to us through an escort,—nobody in the whole world but Walter Fernow is capable of this!"

"Miss Forest! Who is Miss

Forest? Tell us at once, Doctor!" echoed from all sides.

"Do not detain me, gentlemen!" cried the doctor excitedly. "I must go, for as it appears, a stupid error has been committed. Would you know who Miss Forest is? A relative of our first physician in B.; a young American lady, heiress to a million, twenty years old, beautiful as a picture, a meteor, which all B. admires and adores, and whose unhappy devotee I also confess myself to be. God be gracious to you Frederic, if you have been guilty of an incivility to her!"

He hastened away. But the brief sketches he had thrown off of Miss Forest, had electrified the whole company. The words, 'millionaire, twenty years old, beautiful as a picture,' had fallen like so many firebrands into the ears and hearts of the younger officers, and they all at once vowed to make the acquaintance of this interesting personage. But the æsthetic major rose solemnly and followed with long strides. The affair promised to be immensely romantic.

"Frederic," said the fat captain, who had been sitting at his drinking bowl in perfect repose of mind. "Frederic, you have again been guilty of a precious piece of stupidity."

Frederic stood there with open mouth, annihilated, quite cast

down from the height of his self-importance. He threw a bewildered glance towards the entrance of the park, where his "spies" had been received with the most respectful politeness, and a second melancholy one upon the officer sitting near him, and lowering his head, he said with mournful acquiescence:

"I am at your command, Herr Captain."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LOVER'S ACCUSATION.

FERNOW had not counted too much on the hospitality of his comrades; the major more than fulfilled his promise. The journey could under no circumstances be pursued, but all were ready to receive the strangers for the night into the castle, where a number of finely-furnished unoccupied apartments stood at their disposal. Unfortunately, the hopes of the younger gentlemen as to a nearer acquaintance with the beautiful millionaire were doomed to disappointment. They only saw enough of her to verify the doctor's words that she was young and very beautiful; but Miss Forest did not seem inclined to receive the homage of this warlike circle. She

was weary from excitement and the long journey, and after the unavoidable greeting and presentations, she withdrew at once to her chamber.

Doctor Behring looked melancholy, the other gentlemen disconcerted; but the young lady had really been pale as marble, and the few words she had spoken had cost her such apparent effort, that they could not seek to deny her the repose she so much needed. But her two companions could not decline the invitation of the gentlemen to join their social circle. Atkins, as usual, shone through his sarcastic humor, which to-night was more brilliant than ordinarily, since the test was imposed upon it of atoning for the silence of his companion. Here Alison's ignorance of German came to his aid, but the doctor, who politely assumed the office of interpreter, could scarce draw the simplest answers from the melancholy guest. He laid the fault of this persistent silence to his own defective English, and consoled the young man with assurances of the speedy return of his friend Fernow, who was perfect master of the language. Henry's lips quivered; with icy politeness, he begged the doctor to give himself no anxiety on his account, and as for Lieutenant Fernow, his rounds to-night, seemed endless,

he did not come. But the major received an evidently important piece of tidings in place of the Lieutenant; he beckoned to the adjutant, and withdrew with him. This was a signal for the breaking up of the party; and the two American gentlemen were at liberty to withdraw.

The carriages had meantime arrived, and the baggage was brought in. It was already quite dark when the two Americans entered the apartment assigned them, and which, like that given to Jane, lay in the second story of the castle, while the officers were quartered in the first, so as to be at hand in case of alarm. Atkins, with a sigh of relief, threw himself upon a sofa, Alison began to pace silently up and down the room. In vain did his companion wait for a word, a remark; not a syllable came from his lips; he still paced dumbly to and fro, his arms crossed, his head bowed. The continuous silence at length became oppressive to Atkins.

"Things cannot go on in this way, Henry!" he said. "Your betrothal must be acknowledged. You saw that strange meeting in the village as well as I. What do you think of it?"

Alison paused, and lifted his head. "Why did you come here with Miss Forest?" he asked in a cutting tone.

"Henry, I beg you——"

"Why did you come here with Miss Forest?" repeated Alison, but this time a repressed fury pulsed through his voice.

"To look after a family affair!"

Henry laughed bitterly. "Spare yourself this deception. I now know all!"

"Then you know more than I!" declared Atkins gravely. "I at least only half understood that scene. This Fernow—well, his sentiment scarce needed expression, he betrayed it plainly enough; but why Miss Jane, at sight of him, shrank back horrified as if she had seen a ghost, is incomprehensible to me."

"And to me also," said Alison with icy scorn. "One is not usually frightened at sight of anything reached at last after such a painful effort."

Atkins frowned. "It is fortunate that Miss Jane does not hear you; she would never forgive you this suspicion. You ought to know her too well to suppose she would start out on a mere aimless adventure, and now you accuse her with a contempt for all the proprieties and moralities, with having come here in pursuit of a man almost a stranger. Do you believe this of Miss Forest? Fie, Henry!"

Alison remained immovable at this reproach; but the old, chilling

irony was in his voice, as he replied:

"I know that Miss Forest would die sooner than make the slightest advance of this kind to me; but, well this is not the first time that a woman's pride has been annihilated before a pair of dreamy blue eyes like these."

"You are going too far!" cried Atkins, indignantly. "I promised to be silent, but in answer to accusations like this, Jane herself ought to speak, and if she will not speak, I will! Well then, we are seeking some one here in France; we are in pursuit of a man, but this man is not named Fernow, and does not offer you the least occasion for jealousy. He bears Miss Forest's name and is her brother!"

"Her brother?" repeated Alison in bewildered surprise.

"Yes!" And Atkins now began in a brief, lucid way, to tell the young man all; of Mr. Forest's dying request, of the trace found in Hamburg, and of the subsequent investigations, up to the time of their departure from N. Alison listened in silence for a moment, he seemed to breathe more freely, but his brow remained clouded.

"You are right," he said, "I believe you now; that meeting was not pre-arranged."

Atkins gazed at him in speechless astonishment. And was

this all? He had expected another reception of his tidings.

"You seem to quite forget, Henry, how nearly this matter concerns you," he said impressively. "If, as we have reason to believe, this young Mr. Forest lives; if we find him, as we hope to do, it will cost you half the fortune you expect with your bride."

"Ah, is that so?" muttered Alison. "And I would give the other half if she had never set foot on this German soil!"

Atkins started back. He had not thought this possible. If Henry could so entirely forget and deny the merchant in his character; if he could speak in this way of the loss of a fortune, he must be terribly in earnest. He approached the young man and laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Jealousy makes you blind," he said in a pacific tone. "Whatever there may be between these two, and it is doubtless some secret, it cannot be love; Jane's terror at the unexpected meeting, betrayed anything but that."

Alison glanced at him coldly and derisively. "You are very unfortunate in your powers of observation, Mr. Atkins. Who was it that in B. derided my presentiment that I saw danger to my hopes in this consumptive professor? Does he still seem to you laughable and of little account, or do you know at

least what powers have lain dormant in this man?"

"I have misjudged him, but I defy any one to estimate justly the character of a man who for years long, plays the role of a misanthropic hermit and learned investigator, then all at once really explodes as a poet, soars aloft as a hero in war, where to all human foresight it seemed clear that he would subside at the first roar of the cannon; and, at an unexpected meeting, flames up like an eighteen-year-old enthusiast. I tell you it takes a long time to find out these Germans! Once tear them from their commonplace ruts in which they have been wont to tread, and they go on in unaccountable ways. It is so with solitary individuals, it is so with the whole nation. They hurl the pen into a corner, and draw the sword from its scabbard, as if this had been their sole business their whole life long. I fear that for the next hundred years we shall not forget in what hand the pen lay!"

Atkins said all this in a peculiar tone of grumbling admiration; but he remembered at the right time, that such observations were not designed to pacify his young companion, and dropping the subject, he said consolingly:

"But Henry, however things may turn out, Jane remains yours. You have her promise; you have

received it of her own free will, and the Forests are wont to keep their word to themselves and others. In whatever manner this Fernow may cross her path, I know her, she will be yours notwithstanding."

"She will!" replied Alison morosely. "You may rely upon that, Mr. Atkins! Either with or against her consent; my determination is irrevocable, even though—and here the former ill-omened expression reappeared upon his face—"even though a pair of blue eyes should have to close forever!"

Atkins recoiled in horror; he made no reply. Darkness had fallen; from the village, in tones long drawn out, came the evening signal; Henry started up and took his hat from the table. With a hasty step the old man stood at his side, and grasped his arm.

"Where are you going?"

"Out into the open air. To the park."

"Now? It is quite dark."

"But I must go out for all that; the air here oppresses me. Perhaps—" he smiled strangely—"perhaps I shall bring better thoughts in with me. Good-night."

Freeing his arm by a hasty movement, he left the room. Atkins gazed uneasily after him.

"Something terrible may happen. If they should chance to meet just now!—Foolishness!" he cried interrupting himself.

"Just as if Henry were such a lunatic as to stake life, honor, and future for a mad jealous whim! If he were to meet this Fernow alone in the mean time, I would answer for nothing; but here among his comrades, where discovery would be inevitable, and revenge sure—no, he would not venture it!"

He opened his door to listen if any sound came from Jane's chamber which lay opposite. "She shut herself in immediately upon our arrival," he said to himself, "and called out to me that she had already lain down—a pretence! I heard her plainly pacing to and fro; but it is of no use to renew my effort to force a conversation with her; perhaps her intervention would only make matters worse.—I had better see that we leave early to-morrow morning, for no matter where; if things come to the worst we can go back to B. When this Fernow is only out of sight, it will be an easy matter to keep our betrothed couple together, and until then—well in any event they can only sleep one single night under the same roof!"

With this consoling thought, Mr. Atkins closed the door, and returned to his chamber.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FATEFUL HOUR.

THE silence that ruled throughout the castle was in striking contrast to the merry, animated life of the afternoon. A light already burned in the major's chamber, the adjutant and another of the officers were there; the other gentlemen seemed to have withdrawn, for the large ante-room, which opened upon the terrace and usually served as the evening rendezvous, was quite solitary, except that for the moment Frederic was there trying to light a fire in the grate as a protection against the cool, evening air. He undertook this service very unwillingly, and with much grumbling against the castellan who had remained behind, but saw fit to shirk the duties he had been ordered to perform, and as usual, was nowhere to be found.

Frederic had at last succeeded in kindling the dry wood heaped up in the grate; the flames leaped forth merrily, and Frederic had just resigned himself to melancholy reflection over the worthlessness of French servants in general and the shortcoming of French stewards, in particular, when a light hand was laid upon his shoulder, and turning around he saw that Miss Forest stood close behind him.

"Has Lieutenant Fernow yet returned?" she asked.

"Yes," answered Frederic greatly surprised at the question; "ten minutes ago."

"Tell him that I wish to speak with him."

Frederic was still more surprised. "With my master?"

"Yes, I wish to speak with your master. Tell him that I await him here.—Hasten!"

An imperious wave of the hand accompanied the command, for command it was, and Frederic trudged away. Just as he was outside the door, it occurred to him that it was no longer fitting for him, one of the heroes of this glorious Prussian army, to be ordered around in this way by that American Miss; but it was with him as with Mr. Atkins; his will sank powerless before her imperious tone and glance; so, growling and muttering, but obedient, he went to his master's room on the required errand.

Jane had remained back alone in the large gloomy apartment which was only partially lighted by a chandelier suspended from the ceiling. Outside profound darkness already reigned; the moon had not yet risen, the winds sighed through the trees, and through the one open window floated the cold evening air. She shuddered involuntarily, and approaching the grate sank down into an arm-chair, whose richly

carved back displayed an old French coat of arms.

She was now just on the verge of certainty! All must become clear between them,—the next fifteen minutes would unveil the long buried secret! With what emotions Jane looked forward to his unveiling was known to her alone. The flames as they rose and fell lighted up a face upon which was now mirrored one only expression, firm, unyielding decision. "*It must be!*" With these words, Forest had taught his daughter to endure every conflict and to bear every sorrow; but in his lifetime she had known little of sorrow or conflict. Now the trial had come; but dumbly, without lamentation, she bowed to the iron law of necessity.

For one moment, that unexpected reunion had overpowered her; but it had been for only a moment, it was not in Jane's nature to recoil from any decisive step; she was no coward, and she would now have a certainty, even though that certainty was to prove her destruction. The features wrought to their fullest energy, the compressed lips, and the determined icy glance, at this moment, gave her a really frightful resemblance to her dead father. There was not a breath of weakness, of submission; all was hard, rigid, icy; these features said—

"let come what will, it shall be borne!"

The door opened from the outside, and Fernow entered. He closed the door behind him, but remained standing close to the threshold.

"You wished to see me, Miss Forest!"

"I wished an interview with you, Lieutenant Fernow. Shall we be undisturbed here?"

"I hope so for the next fifteen minutes."

"Ah—I beg you to come nearer."

He approached her slowly, and paused at the fireplace, directly opposite her. Between them crackled and glistened the flames, their lurid reflection sharply lighting up both these forms. They alone were visible in the half-darkened room; visible also to him who was pacing up and down the terrace just outside.

"I was not prepared for this summons, Miss Forest. After our meeting in the village it seemed to me as if you wished to avoid every approach on my side. I followed your command; it is you now who have summoned me."

There lay perhaps some bitterness in these words, but Fernow's bitterness was seldom cutting or harmful. Jane recognized only a gentle, deeply painful reproach; nothing more.

"My conduct may seem enigmatical to you Lieutenant Fernow, she said; "I owe you an explanation; but before I make it, I beg you to answer a few questions."

He nodded in silent assent.

"In the first place, will you tell me your given name?"

Of all questions, Fernow seemed least to have expected this. "My given name?"

"Yes."

"I am called Walter."

"Walter?" A deep breath of relief came involuntarily from Jane's breast. "Walter! I do not know that name."

"And why should you know it, Miss Forest?" he asked in evident surprise. "We were strangers until the moment you trod the soil of Germany."

"Perhaps so!" Her glance fastened itself gloomily upon the lurid flame-images which in endless transformations darted forth and fell back dissolved in nothingness; "and perhaps not! You told me once that you had been thrust out into life without parents and without a home; that you had fallen into the hands of a learned man who had led you also into the paths of science.—Was this learned man a clergyman?"

"Yes; but after a time he left his parish and his vocation to give himself entirely up to science."

Jane convulsively pressed her

left hand against her breast. "And—his name?"

"Pastor Hartwig!"

A deep, momentous pause! The flames darted yet higher and threw their quivering light upon a deathly-pale, deathly-cold face; not a syllable came from her lips; she remained motionless in her place.

"Miss Forest, what does all this mean?" Walter's voice was low and anxious. "Why these strange questions? Did you know my foster-father? Were you in any way connected with him?"

At these last words, he had stepped nearer, and now stood close to her; Jane seemed not to have heard the question; she gave no answer.

"Johanna!"

A light shudder passed over her. This name! Only once before had she heard it from his lips, in that parting-hour, and it sounded like a melody out of the sweet, far-away days of her childhood. Her mother had once called her so, but only for a short space; the German name of his child had fallen a sacrifice to the rigid will of her father; it had been changed to the English, "Jane." Never since then, had she heard it again, and now as it came from his lips, it had such a soft, entreating tone—all her strength gave way before this one word.

Slowly she lifted her glance to

him; it met his eyes, and for a moment, rested in them. Those blue eyes that with mournful tenderness hung upon her face—even now they exerted their mysterious power, a power which, at this moment, when all doubt must be solved, when the inevitable decision must be made, forced this proud, obstinate woman to forget the desire which had so long haunted her, to forget the momentous decision, which wrested her from all the conflict and torture of the few past hours, and with irresistible might, impelled her on into the dream he himself was dreaming at this moment.

She sat again by the willow-hedge where the first green buds of spring were opening, and he stood at her side. All around them brooded the fog, weaving its gray veil over tree and shrub; the rain-drops fell lightly upon the thirsty sod, strange whisperings and echoes thrilled the air, while above all, fell upon their ears the undulating murmurs of the distant Rhine. The present and the real dissolved in nothingness; she knew nothing, felt nothing, but that dumb, inexplicable anguish she had there experienced. She was willessly, powerlessly under the spell of these eyes.

They both started with a sudden tremor, affrighted at the same moment, by an unknown something.

The dream-picture dissolved with its swaying mists and its soft, tender reminiscences of the spring; they were again in that lofty, gloomy apartment of the gray stone castle; inside the fire blazed and crackled, outside, the autumn wind murmured through the trees; perhaps it was the wind that drove a bough against the window, and recalled them from this dream of remembrance. Jane was first to glance out in that direction, and Walter's eyes followed hers.

"We are observed!" she said softly.

"Hardly! But I will find out!"

He walked to the window, opened it wide and bent far out into the darkness, Jane had risen and leaned heavily against the back of the easy chair blazoned with its coat of arms. Now the most difficult thing was to come! He must learn that which to her was no longer a subject of doubt.

"I will see whether he is able to bear it." Perhaps only the voice of nature spoke in this tenderness; perhaps—there was a convulsive shudder at her heart—"he will smile at the discovery. Well, then, if he can bear it, I will not betray my weakness even though I should die at my brother's first kiss!"

Walter had closed the window, and now came back to her. "It is nothing," he said calmly. "Who

could have interest enough in our affairs to watch us?" Jane knew already the way in which she had to go; she entered upon it with unfaltering step.

"Who? Mr. Alison!"

Walter started back and glanced at her in consternation.

"Mr. Alison? Your travelling companion?"

"Yes."

That deep glow, sudden and fiery, again mounted his face, until it covered forehead and temples.

"And he is not a stranger to you, this man? I thought it must be so the first moment I met him—Johanna—" his voice trembled in feverish excitement—"and what relation does Alison stand to you? What right has he over you?"

"I am his betrothed."

The flush vanished from his face, quickly as it had come, and a deep pallor took its place.

"His betrothed!" repeated he in a hollow voice.

"And do you love him?"

"No!"

"And still have you given him your promise—your future?"

There lay a bitter lament in this reproach. Jane's glance fell. "I have done so," she replied in a low voice.

"Then would to God we had never met!" said Walter despairingly.

Jane was silent for a moment. "And why?" she asked at length almost inaudibly.

He stepped close to her, and his voice also fell to a low, but impassioned whisper.

"And do you ask? Need I tell you in words what you long since must have divined, or—is it I alone who will be wretched through your confession?"

Slowly Jane again turned her face to him; her voice sounded unnaturally calm, but her eyes were fixed upon his face with an unremitting, anxious inquiry, as if every fibre of his inner being must answer her.

"We need not make ourselves wretched on this account, we *must* not. Destiny has brought us together cruelly, perhaps, but if it denies us the highest happiness, it has not ordained our separation. Perhaps—" her glance sank deeper and deeper into his—"perhaps I can persuade my future husband to a long residence upon the Rhine. I know that a single word from my lips will make him approach you as a friend. You need not thrust back this hand! Walter. You will learn to control your emotions, you will learn to regard me as a friend as a brother should—"

"Johanna!" interrupted he with a wild, passionate outcry. She was silent, but her eyes did not leave his face; it had now the

same expression as upon that first meeting in N., as if the next moment would bring with it a decision for life or death.

"And you say this to *me!*" he broke out in uncontrollable anguish. "Must I hear it from your lips? Would you deride the enthusiast, the dreamer, in me, or do you yourself dream of a tie of ideal friendship, where love becomes sacrilege? Do not deceive yourself! Between spirits such a tie may be possible, but not between hearts; there it could spring only from coldness or from crime. Once in the solitude of my study, shut out from all the world, I too indulged in just such sickly fancies; then came this love to you, impelling me out into active life, into earnest, glowing reality. And this life and this reality now demand their right; I must either possess you or lose you eternally! No third person can come between us."

It was the deep, ardent tone of passion, a passion that thrilled his whole being, that palpitated through every word he uttered, and before this onrushing tide of emotion, fell the last prop to which Jane had clung. But all at once, she stood erect and without support. Right through the certainty of her infinite misfortune, broke a feeling that was mightier even than despair. His words only echoes the sentiment of her own soul;

she was beloved even as she herself loved.

She heaved a sigh, "You are right, Walter!" she said. "In our case love becomes sacrilege; I see it now! Between us two there can henceforth be but one command—separation!"

He shuddered at the words. "And can you speak this so calmly! and do you think I shall yield to it without having sought the utmost? Johanna, no sacred oath binds you; a promise can be dissolved, a word can be taken back—are your vows irrevocable?"

"They are!"

"Reflect"—his voice trembled in anguished entreaty—"this concerns the happiness of my whole life and yours also! You can save us both by one only decision. Can you not rend the tie which binds you to this Alison?"

Here with a violent noise the door was burst open, and Frederic's powerful voice was heard.

"Herr Lieutenant, the major begs you to come to him this instant!"

Walter turned around. "What is it!" he asked bewildered. "Where am I to go?"

"To the Herr Major; all the officers are gathered there."

"Very well, I will come."

The door closed again, and Frederic's heavy receding step was heard. Yet once more Walter turned back to Jane; his face was

pale as death, but a wild unrest glowed in his eyes.

"You hear; I must go! We are in the midst of war, the next hour, the next moment may rend us asunder. Johanna, I ask you for the last time, can you, will you not be mine?"

"Never, Walter! Even though Alison set me free, and every other barrier fell—never!"

"Then farewell!" he sobbed despairingly, and stretched out his arms, as if he would clasp her to his breast; but with a trembling movement Jane recoiled from him, and raised her hand with a repelling gesture. For a moment he stood as if petrified before her; then he bowed low and distantly.

"You are right, Miss Forest—farewell!"

He was gone, and Jane remained alone—alone with this stony burden on her breast, for the final veil had not been lifted, the final word not spoken. It had pressed violently to her lips, but a strange might had held it back, the fear of seeing him suffer still more, than through her mere *no*. She who usually spared none, because she was always pitiless against herself, trembled now before a strange sorrow. For the first time the hard "*it must be!*" of her father lost its power; for the first time she felt that she could not yield to an inevitable necessity. She

had firmly faced all conflicts and tortures; but when, as it now happened, she must also deliver him to this struggle, the woman in her rose in all its anxiety, all its timidity, she shrank back trembling and cowardly before the decisive word—for his sake.

To-morrow! Until then, he must school himself to familiarity with the loss; he would then more easily bear the "*why*." Now it had crushed him utterly.—And Jane's powers of endurance were also at an end. She broke out into a low sobbing; but amid the sobs she moaned softly. "I should have died if he could have borne it!"

CHAPTER XXI.

A DESPERATE RESOLVE.

THINGS looked very grave in the major's apartment. A council of war was in progress. The major himself, with a perplexed air, his hands crossed behind his back, was pacing up and down; the adjutant and a young lieutenant, with thoughtful, anxious faces, sat at the table around which were grouped Doctor Behrend and the other officers. Walter Fernow was the last to enter.

"I have had you summoned, gentlemen," began the major, in

evident perturbation, "to acquaint you with a piece of bad news. You know that we expect reinforcements. Captain Schwarz, with his battalion from L., was to unite with us to-morrow. I sent word to him that the mountain road was safe, but I now find this an error I cannot recall."

All faces betrayed a restless suspense; all eyes were fixed upon the major, who continued excitedly as before.

"Lieutenant Witte has just returned with his scouting party. He captured a French peasant on the way, who would not answer his question, but who afterward, becoming intoxicated, prated such strange things and gave such taunting hints, that it was thought best to secure him. Intimidated by threats, he made some confessions which unfortunately were verified, word for word in a reconnoissance which at once followed. The French fusileers, strongly reinforced, hold the mountains between here and L. They have taken possession of the passes, and as they know of the intended march of our soldiers, they will no doubt attack them."

A tremor of alarm passed through the circle of officers. They knew the mountain region too well not to have a full conception of the danger that threatened their comrades.

"I feared as much," said the captain after a momentary pause; "I feared that some military stratagem lay at the foundation of the sudden disappearance of the French soldiers. You know that within the last few days the passes have been entirely free, so that our patrols could wander unharmed over the mountains, while before, they were fired upon from every cleft in the rocks. The enemy only withdrew for a little space to make us feel more secure; but meantime he has been uniting his forces; now hidden away in their inaccessible fastnesses, they will rush forth to strike us a mortal blow."

"The all-important question," said the major, "is how we shall send a warning to L. Our communications are severed, the passes are held by the enemy, so Lieutenant Witte informs us."

"Wholly so, Herr Major," added the young officer, who at these last words, had turned to his superior. "The French hold the mountain roads as well as the pathways which lead along the cliffs on the other side of the river. It must have happened very recently, for this morning the way was clear; but they now have entire possession, and every patrol, every foot-traveller they get a glimpse of, is shot down without question."

"And if they seize our men in

that narrow pass, not a single one will leave it alive," cried the major excitedly. "They will be attacked both in front and in the rear, and shot at by men concealed on the heights. It is a desperate situation!"

"Could not a messenger be sent over to E.?" asked the adjutant. "The way there is unobstructed."

"But he would have to go half around the mountains. It would take too long; at early dawn the battalion will be on the march; if the warning does not arrive by three in the morning, it will be too late!"

"Herr Major!" The voice of young Lieutenant Witte sounded somewhat timid as he ventured to give counsel, but the most courageous determination beamed from his eyes. "There is perhaps one resource, the simplest of all. We might hurl ourselves with all our available strength upon the enemy, overthrow him, and make the path free to our comrades."

In spite of the fearful gravity of the situation, the major smiled; then he shook his head.

"The advice does you all honor, Lieutenant Witte, but it could only come from a three-and-twenty year old head: it is not practicable. You have heard that the enemy has a three-fold strength; the situation makes it tenfold. We should share the fate which threat-

ens our men without being able to rescue them."

Among the officers the proposal of their comrade had found a lively assent; they now besieged the major with entreaties to carry it into execution, but he remained firm.

"And they would seize us in the rear. Are these fellows not hiding in all the woods, have they not spies everywhere among the inhabitants? Our march, which would be immediately betrayed, would be the signal for them to follow us, and we shut up between two fires, could go neither forward nor backward. Impossible! We will not leave our posts, but we must be doubly on our guard to-night. Who knows how far the plans and the connections of these bands may extend? Perhaps they design to make a second attack here, and upon us."

This reasoning was so convincing, that none sought to oppose it. All were silent.

"But yet we cannot calmly look on and see our men march unsuspecting to certain destruction," interposed Doctor Behrend.

"No!" said the major decidedly. "The messenger must go. And even were the mountains tenfold more impassable, some possible way must be found."

At this moment, Walter Fernow, the only officer who had hitherto

taken no part in the discussion, stepped forward, and said:

"Herr Major, I know a way out of this difficulty."

"And what is it, Lieutenant Fernow?"

"We have often enough reconnoitred the mountains. I know them perfectly. You are aware that a week ago I, with five men, undertook a *reconnaissance* around L. which at that time was occupied by the enemy. We ventured too far, we were pursued by some twenty, attacked and at last dispersed."

"Yes.—Well?"

"After a few shots, with Corporal Braun, who already had a ball in his arm, I threw myself into a side defile where they lost trace of us. The others escaped in another direction. As we pressed on, we found a narrow path half concealed in a thicket; this we took, as it seemed to lead in the direction of S. It rose gradually to the summit of the mountain, and then ran, for the most part hidden in the forest, along the crest, and at last sank precipitously, to the entrance of that narrow, impassable defile, which lies a quarter of an hour's distance from here to the right of the valley. We had for some minutes wound through dense shrubbery, and then we stood suddenly upon that projecting rocky plateau of the mountain-road, where stands

a large, solitary fir-tree. From there we reach L. in a short time."

Fernow said all this lucidly and calmly. His manner had nothing of the perturbation of a man who, scarce ten minutes before, had come from an interview which had blighted his whole future. He spoke more gravely and deliberately than usual, and a gloomy calm lay upon his features; the calmness of one who has made a fixed decision. This was no time to lament over a lost love, a lost happiness; he had found a remedy, the speediest, most infallible of all.

The officers had listened in intense excitement; but the major's brow remained clouded.

"And do you believe that the French fusileers, who are at home in this region, do not know the way just as well, even better than you?" he asked.

"Know it—probably! But the question is, do they watch it; for in the first place, they cannot presuppose our knowledge of it; and in the second, they do not dream that their plan is betrayed to us. They will concentrate principally in the defiles and around the declivities; that elevated path may possibly remain out of their reckoning, and this gives it an advantage over the other ways which we know are guarded."

"And do you believe that way is passable at night?"

"On a full-moon night like this—yes! The moonlight removes the principal difficulty—that of finding the entrance amid the bushes, and following the first abrupt windings. Once beyond these, no error is possible; the light shimmers brightly enough through the trees, and from the opening of the path to L. the mountain-highway may be used; the enemy would scarce venture on so far toward the village."

The major, in deep reflection, paced up and down. "You are right;" he said at last. "The attempt must be made, although it must always be an insane venture to send two, or at the most, three men, through a region occupied by the enemy, upon the faint possibility that they have left this path unguarded. It is ten to one you will be discovered, and shot down; the danger is too great.—Do you, remember the path exactly?"

"Exactly."

"Well, then, only one thing remains to us, to find among our men, some who are confident and courageous enough to undertake such an expedition. Corporal Braun—"

"Lies sick of his wound," interrupted Walter calmly. "You see, Herr Major, that the duty falls upon me."

"Walter! Are you out of your senses?" cried Doctor Behrend, in consternation.

The major too had started back, and all the officers with a sort of horrified surprise, gazed upon their comrade. Walter was the general favorite; the pride of his equals, and the darling of his superiors. Despite his silence and modesty, he possessed that boundless influence over those around him, which is peculiar to genial natures. They had often enough seen him rush first to the conflict, they had shared danger with him; but to fall in open combat at the side of one's comrades, with weapons in one's hand, is quite a different thing from being laid low solitary and defenceless, by a ball from some ambush, or being reserved perhaps for a yet more mournful destiny. It requires more than the usual courage to look forward to such a fate, and they would sooner have sacrificed any other than Walter Fernow.

"You—you, Lieutenant Fernow?" said the major deliberately. "That will not do! I must sacrifice no officer in such an undertaking; we lost enough of them in our last battle, and need all we have left for the next. Such an errand is the business of a common soldier, and I must let some private perform it."

Walter advanced a step nearer the table; the light of the candles fell full upon his face; it was white as marble.

"I am at this moment the only one who knows the way," he said, "the only one who can go in it. The path cannot be described; to confide the mission to another, would be to imperil its success at the outset."

"But," returned the major, in a voice full of repressed emotion; "I can now do without you least of all, and I repeat it to you, the possibility of finding the path open is too small; the probability is you would all be shot down!"

"Perhaps, and perhaps not! In any event, this possibility shall not hold me back from a venture, that you would entrust to a common soldier."

The major stepped hastily to him and reached him his hand. "You are right!" he said simply. "Well, then, go in God's name! If you succeed, you rescue some hundreds of my brave boys, if not—well, he who dies from a stray bullet, meets none the less a hero's death.—How many men will you take with you?"

"Not any! If we are attacked we must yield to numbers, and where one falls, the others are not likely to escape. It would be to sacrifice men uselessly, as a single one will suffice to carry the message. Besides, a number might greatly enhance the danger; a single person would be more likely to escape discovery."

The old superior officer, with undisguised admiration, gazed upon the young poet and dreamer, as Walter was often enough jestingly called, but who, once aroused from his reverie, had shown such a cool, energetic, practical good sense, in even the minutest details of the service. He indeed divined nothing of the storm which had just been raging in this man's soul, or the source of the calmness with which he rushed into danger.

"And you will go alone? When do you think of starting?"

"Not for an hour. I must wait until the moon rises, as I need its full light to show me the way to the heights.—Even though some unforeseen hindrance should arise, I have plenty of time."

"Well, then, gentlemen," said the major to the other officers, "go now, and prepare yourselves for any alarm that may be given to-night. Herr Captain, see that the posts are doubly guarded, that the orders previously given are exactly carried out. I will meantime advise with Lieutenant Fernow."

The officers obeyed, but at the door, the captain turned around once more.

"Good-night, Lieutenant Fernow!" he said.

A smile flitted over Walter's lips; too well he knew the meaning of the farewell.

"Good-night, captain! Good-night, gentlemen!"

Then turning, he met the eyes of Doctor Behrend resting gravely and reproachfully upon him.

"Do you then care nothing at all for your life?" he asked beneath his breath.

"No!" was the melancholy answer given in the same tone.

The doctor sighed. "I shall see you before you leave?"

"Probably! But go now, Robert!"

With another and still heavier sigh, the surgeon followed the others, and Walter remained alone with the major and the adjutant.

CHAPTER XXII.

A FEARFUL ALTERNATIVE.

A QUARTER of an hour might have passed, when he left his superior officers to go to his own room. He had just set foot in the corridor when a dark figure left the wall where it had been standing motionless, and crossed his path.

"Lieutenant Fernow, I have been a long time awaiting you!"

Walter paused; he recognized the American.

"What do you want of me, Mr. Alison?"

"Can I have the honor of a conversation with you?"

Fernow glanced at his watch,

he had nearly an hour's time. "I am at your service," he said.

He knew what was coming; a single glance at Alison's face had convinced him that Jane's apprehensions were well founded. And this also! Not a single drop of the bitter cup was to be spared him!

Alison, without a word further, had passed on before him, and opened a door opposite. Walter for a moment hesitated about entering; it was the room in which he had just been speaking with Jane. Alison remarked his embarrassment.

"We shall be undisturbed here. Or, have you perhaps an antipathy to this room?"

Without answering, the young officer hastily passed the threshold, and Alison followed him. The room was again quite solitary. The hanging lamp sent down its subdued light, the fire in the grate burned low; but red gleams now and then shot forth from the embers, throwing an ill-omened light around these two forms. Walter, as before, leaned against the mantel; opposite him, in the place where Jane had sat, stood Henry; between them the dim reflection of the fire.

Strange as it might seem, the same sentiment glowed in the souls of these two men; fiery, overmastering passion for one being,

and both alike hopeless, stood amid the ruins of their happiness; but in the outward appearance of the two, this common sentiment found an infinitely different expression.

Upon the German's face lay a white, motionless calm; his deep, dreamy nature was not one to break loose from a passion which had engraven itself in the profoundest depths of his heart, and had taken root there forever. He could neither conquer nor endure it; but the alternative he had chosen, had nothing in it base or humiliating. "He who falls by a stray bullet, dies also a hero's death," thought he, and there was something like inspiration in the glance he now turned to the park, where rays of light began to pierce the shadows among the trees—the moon had just risen in the East.

In striking contrast to him was the man who stood opposite—Henry's features were distorted by a really demoniac fury; his eyes had a glance of evil omen, and only by an exertion of all his strength could he control the convulsive quivering of his lips. The cool calculation with which the young merchant had stretched forth his hand to grasp a million, had succeeded; but the love he had promised himself with all this was of far more value. Fearfully, passion asserted her right; under her spell, blind, unsympathetic for all else,

he was about to sacrifice life and honor for her sake.

Walter waited in silence for some minutes, until Alison could so control his emotion as to speak. His voice had a hoarse, metallic tone, as he at last said:

"I wish an explanation from you, Lieutenant Fernow, which you cannot well deny me. Almost an hour ago you had an interview in this room with Miss Forest."

"Yes; and were you a witness of it?"

"I was!"

The young officer remained perfectly calm. "Then you must have heard what was said."

Alison's lips curled in scorn. "You spoke German with her, the beloved mother-tongue! And so the confessions of your love and tenderness were debarred from me. But one name, I heard. It sounded very sweet, that 'Johanna,' almost as sweet as the 'Walter' from her lips!"

A slight flush passed over Walter's face; but he quickly repressed his emotion. "I believe you had a question to ask me, Mr. Alison," he said. "Let us stick to our subject!"

"Yes, let us stick to our subject!" replied Alison, in a hollow voice. "You love Miss Forest!"

"Yes!"

"And are loved in return?"

Walter was silent, but Alison's eyes flamed upon him in such con-

suming hatred, that any evasion here would have seemed cowardice.

"Yes!" he returned firmly.

A sound came from Henry's lips like the hiss of a wounded serpent.

"I regret that I must disturb this perfect understanding. Perhaps Miss Forest has already told you that I have prior rights, and am not inclined to resign them to you."

"She has told me!"

"Well, then, you must understand that if the hand of Miss Forest is pledged to me, I will tolerate no love in her to any one but her future husband; at least to no *living* man!"

Walter recoiled in horror. "Does that mean a challenge?"

"Yes; do not start back, Lieutenant Fernow, I waive all your German proprieties as to witnesses, seconds and preliminaries, I offer you a far simpler method. We will draw lots, or throw dice, we two alone, and fortune shall decide. The losing one shall pledge his word of honor not to be among the living twenty-four hours after, and the thing is done."

There was an expression of contempt on Walter's face as he coldly replied; "I regret, Mr. Alison, that this sort of satisfaction does not accord with my ideas of honor. If we must be arrayed against each other, let it be in the orthodox way, eye to eye with weapon in hand. I

would fight for my life; not cast lots for it."

Alison's eyes flashed in annihilating scorn. "It certainly may not be so poetical as your German duel, but it is more—sure!"

"But I will not consent. And besides you seem to forget that such a thing is not to be thought of while I belong to the army. My life is not my own, it is my country's. I must not deprive my fatherland of one even the least of its defenders, and while the war lasts, I must neither seek nor yield to private revenge. If I fall, your wish will be gratified; if not, after peace is declared, I am ready to give you the required satisfaction—not before!"

Alison laughed derisively. "After the peace! Perhaps when you have returned to your professor's chair, when rector and regent, when in case of need the whole university covers you with the ægis of science; when all rise in moral exasperation against a barbarism of the middle ages, least of all befitting a teacher of youth. Then at last, impelled by these higher considerations, you will decline! It is a masterly idea, Lieutenant Fernow! But I am not simple enough to fall into the snare you set for me!"

Walter's face glowed with suppressed rage. Involuntarily, he laid his hand upon his sword.

"How many of the battles in which I have fought, have you gazed at through a spy-glass?" he asked coolly.

The reproach was effectual, but it only the more enraged Alison. It was a tiger's glance he gave the man standing before him.

"Let us end this!" he said savagely. "I offer you one more choice. Give me this night the satisfaction I demand either in my way or in yours. I am ready for all, or—"

"Or what?"

"The consequences be upon your own head!"

Walter crossed his arms and gazed down at his enemy, as if from an unapproachable height. "It cannot possibly happen to-night, as I shall not be here. I must go to the mountains—" A wild, terrible gleam shot suddenly from Alison's eyes; he bent forward and listened, intent and breathless, to what followed—"and all that remains to me is to repeat to you my former words: our quarrel must rest until the end of the war; it cannot be settled a day sooner, and if you seek to force me through insults, I shall appeal to my superior officers."

The last threat was quite unnecessary, for Alison had all at once become calm, strangely calm; he smiled, but it was a smile so icy-cold as to make one shudder.

"Another irrevocable *no*! Very

well! But if we should chance to meet again, Lieutenant Fernow, remember that it was I who offered you honorable combat, and that you refused it. *Au revoir!*"

He went. Walter remained motionless in his place and gazed silently down at the last faint glow of the expiring embers. Dead, like the bright glowing flames that had lighted his interview with Jane; dead alike their vivid reflection, and last weary, fitful gleams; but now and then solitary sparks quivered here and there, danced awhile like *ignes fatui* to and fro, and then at last sank away like all else, in dust and ashes. Through the window, the moon now threw a long silver stripe over the floor of the room. It would soon be time to go.

The door hastily opened; this time it was Mr. Atkins who excitedly entered, and approached Fernow.

"I have been seeking you, Lieutenant Fernow!" he said uneasily. "You are alone; has Mr. Alison not been with you?"

"He has just left me."

"I thought as much!" muttered Atkins. "I met him on the stairs. What has happened? What is the trouble between you?"

Walter turned to go. "That, Mr. Atkins, is a matter which concerns him and me alone. Good-night."

Atkins held him back; there

was a strange uneasiness in his face. "Listen to reason, Lieutenant Fernow," he said, "and at least, give me an answer. Alison will tell me nothing, but his face says enough. I come to warn you; guard yourself against him!"

Walter shrugged his shoulders. "If you think my life is in danger, you tell me nothing new," he said. "Mr. Alison himself has declared that one of us must leave the world."

"Has he challenged you?"

"He has; and I have told him that the quarrel must rest until the end of the war."

"You little know Henry," said Atkins, "if you think he will submit to that condition. A man driven to madness by passion, does not wait months for his revenge. I do not like the look in his eyes, and I fear it will not be well for you both to sleep to-night under one roof."

"That will not happen," said Walter calmly, "I have to go to the mountains."

"And why must you go?" asked Atkins.

"My errand is a military secret."

"I hope you go well guarded?"

"I am to go alone."

Atkins started back and scanned him from head to foot. "It is very inconsiderate in you to tell this so openly," he said half aloud.

"I certainly should not tell it to

the castle servants or to the villagers," said Walter. "I know you well enough, Mr. Atkins, to fear no treachery on your part."

"And have you told Henry?"

"Yes, as much as I have told you, nothing more!"

"This is German simplicity which I cannot at all understand!" muttered Atkins; then laying his hand on the young man's arm, he said with almost frightful earnestness.

"Lieutenant Fernow, follow my advice. Do not go to the mountains to-night. Your life is threatened; yours alone. Delegate this duty to one of your comrades."

"I cannot!"

"Then at least take a guard with you."

"It is impossible, Mr. Atkins!"

"Well, then, you rush on to your own destruction," cried Atkins excitedly. "I have done my duty; now the consequences be upon your own head!"

"Compose yourself," returned Walter, with a gesture of impatience. "Your apprehensions are unfounded. I tell you it is impossible for any one who does not know the password to go from here to the mountains. We have a triple line of outposts."

These words failed to pacify Atkins. "You do not know Alison!" he said. "He is an uncontrollable nature whom circumstan-

ces and education have subdued only to outward seeming in making him simply a man of business. If such a nature once bursts its long accustomed barriers, it passes all bounds. In his present mood he is capable of anything."

"But not of murder!" said Walter calmly.

"But you have denied him the one legitimate way of revenge, and he will hardly concern himself with ideal conceptions of right and wrong. Be on your guard, Lieutenant Fernow; I cannot vouch for him."

"I have a better opinion of Mr. Alison than you have," returned Walter. "He may hate me to death, but I do not think him capable of the crime you have hinted at. Tell him"—here a peculiar, almost ghastly smile passed over the melancholy face of the young officer—"tell him he need not take my life, his wish may be fulfilled without it. I must go, Mr. Atkins—give my regards to Miss Forest, and—farewell?"

Hastily leaving the room he went to his own chamber.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE VENGEANCE OF PASSION.

ALISON had met Atkins at the foot of the stairs leading to their

apartments, but he had not mounted them. He directed his steps to the room of the French steward of the castle, which had been pointed out to him by one of the soldiers.

The steward, an old man, with sharp, intelligent face, and dark, flashing eyes, sat at a table on which a lamp was burning, and examined his books. He looked up morosely as the door opened, but the embittered resentment which his features wore and with which he met everyone belonging to the hated soldiers quartered in the house, softened somewhat as he recognized the visitor. He knew that the travellers were Americans, forced to seek a night's rest in the castle from the impossibility of finding entertainment in the village. Although guests of the enemy, they did not belong to the hated nation, and the grim reserve which Alison had this afternoon shown in the circle of the officers, and which the Frenchman had found opportunity to observe, gave him a decided advantage. The steward rose, and approached his visitor politely, but still with a sort of chilling reserve.

"In what way can I serve you, Monsieur?"

Henry circumspectly closed the door, and hastily scanned the apartment. "I wish to speak with you on a matter of importance,"

he said. "Are we safe from intrusion?"

"Perfectly so!" returned the Frenchman. "The room, as you see, has only this one door."

Alison drew near the table, and his voice sank to a whisper. "You know, I suppose, that we are forbidden to pursue our journey. My companions have consented to remain here for the night, but I must in any event go on to the mountains."

"That is impossible, Monsieur," said the Frenchman politely but coldly. "The Prussians hold guard over every avenue; no person can reach the mountain-road without their permission."

Alison gazed at the Frenchman sharply and searchingly. "And would you not know how to get there in spite of the guards, if you wished to send tidings to the French sharpshooters in the mountains!"

"I tell you, Monsieur, that all the avenues are guarded."

"There are always lurking-places in the mountains not known to the enemy, and which the inhabitants can use all the more safely," said Alison with great positiveness. "This very afternoon I heard the officers express their opinion, that in spite of the sharpest watch, a secret understandings till existed between the village and the mountains, and in

this case there must be such a path."

"Possibly. But I know of none."

Instead of answering, Alison drew forth his letter-case, took from it a bank-note and silently held it towards the old man. He must have known the value of this piece of paper, and it must have been very great, for he gazed in terror at the American.

"The price of the path," said he curtly.

"I do not allow myself to be bribed, Monsieur," said the Frenchman decidedly.

Alison quietly laid the bank-note on the table. "Not by the Germans, I understand that in advance! They might offer you tenfold this sum, and it would be in vain. But I do not belong to them,—I am not their friend. Did my business concern their interests, I should be allowed to pass their line. The fact that I am compelled to seek your aid, may prove to you that as a Frenchman you can assume the responsibility of this treachery. You *must* tell me the way!"

The argument was just, and the lordly confidence of the American did not fail of its effect upon the old steward; still he did not yield.

"Would you go alone, Monsieur?"

"Certainly."

"And this very night? You perhaps know what you will meet there."

"I do!" declared Alison, who thought it best to conceal his entire ignorance of affairs, and pretend to have been initiated. He reached his goal. He succeeded in goading on the Frenchman in the old steward's nature; in making serviceable his hatred to the enemy. The steward well knew what threatened in the mountains to-night, and the circumstance that the stranger, without the knowledge of the Germans, wished to go there alone, convinced him that here he had to deal with an ally. And so his resistance gave way.

"There is such a path," he said, lowering his voice. "It leads over the mountains to L. The Germans do not know it; even if they have chanced to discover it, it ends for them in the first defile on the right. They cannot possibly know that it continues on the other side, and extending through the forest, connects with our park. The beginning and end are too much hidden by rifts in the rock and by shrubbery; it is a secret of ours."

Alison's eyes gleamed with a savage joy. "Very well; and how am I to find the path?" he asked.

"You go into the park, and pass up the principal avenue, which is unguarded; to the left you will see a statue of Flora. Go

past this into the grotto close by. It is not so closely shut in by the rocky walls, as it appears to be; there is a way of egress from it to the forest. Follow the narrow path through the bushes; there is but one, you cannot err, and in ten minutes you will have reached the defile; it leads to the left up the mountain road to the rocky plateau where stands a solitary fir. There you are already beyond the lines, and far enough from them not to be remarked."

Alison had listened in breathless attention, as if he would hold fast every word in his remembrance; now with an expression of sullen triumph in his eyes, he took the bank-note from the table and handed it to the Frenchman.

"I thank you!" he said. "Here, take this!"

The old man hesitated. "I did not do this for money, Monsieur," he said.

"I know it. It was from hatred to the enemy. Give yourself no uneasiness. I do not need the money, at least not for to-night;" he added, while his lips curled with a cold, bitter irony. "But the information is worth more to me than this paper; take it; it will not lay heavy on your conscience!"

The steward threw one more glance at the money. One would hardly venture such a sum merely to compromise him, and the path

certainly was not of so high value to the Prussians as to this morose stranger. He took the reward and muttered some words of thanks.

When about to go, Alison turned and gazed steadily and threateningly at the old man.

"Your complicity ensures your silence. I need not enjoin silence upon you. The Germans would shoot you if they knew you had helped me through their lines."

"I know it, Monsieur."

"If I return towards morning, I shall have found entrance to the mountains impossible, and shall be supposed to have passed the night in the castle. You are not to know otherwise.—Adieu!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SHADOW OF DOOM.

IN Walter's chamber a bright light was also burning, but upon his entrance he found no one there but Frederic.

"Doctor Behrend has been here the whole time," he said, "and he waited a long while for you; but he has been summoned over to the village. I believe Corporal Braun is in a very bad state."

Walter seemed unpleasantly surprised at these tidings. "Has

Doctor Behrend gone? he asked. I wished very much to speak with him."

"The doctor wished it too. He said I should have ready your cloak and your pistols, as you were to go away this evening, and would not take me with you this time as usual when you go out on patrol duty."

"No, Frederic, not this time," said Walter absently. He paced several times up and down, then he halted suddenly. "It is all the same now!" he murmured. "Why not tell him what I was going to confide to Robert?—Frederic!"

"Herr Lieutenant!"

"It is possible an attack may be made to-night. Have you received orders to be ready for an alarm?"

"Yes, at ten o'clock with two men I am to patrol the park. It is for the sake of security, the captain says, because it is not guarded."

"Very well! In any event you will see the doctor before this. It was very necessary that I should speak with him, but I must go, and I have no time to seek him in the village. You will deliver my errand word for word, just as I tell you; but to him alone, and no other. Do you hear?"

"To no other!"

The next words were very difficult ones for Walter to speak. He struggled with himself for some moments.

"If it should come to a conflict, he is the only one who will not have to take a part in it, and the French sharp-shooters around here are a barbarous horde to whom nothing is sacred. He must protect Miss Forest so far as lies in his power."

"The American Miss?" returned Frederic slowly.

"Yes!" Walter again hesitated, but then all at once the words broke hasty and ardent, from his lips. "Tell him I demand it of him as a last duty of friendship. Miss Forest has been to me the one dearest in the wide world! He shall guard her if he must, with his life!"

Frederic stood there dumb with consternation. This then was the solution of that mysterious hostility between his master and the American Miss! The poor fellow's head began to swim; he was quite incapable of understanding the relation of things.

"You must repeat this word for word!"

"I am at your command, Herr Lieutenant!" answered Frederic mechanically. He stood there as if rooted to his place, and saw his master examine the pistols and throw on the cloak. When he had arrived at the door, Frederic rushed after him.

"Herr Professor!"

Walter paused and glanced

around. During the whole war, Frederic had not called him by this name, he had never forgotten the military title of his master, which it had always been his highest delight to emphasize as much as possible. How had this souvenir of B. all at once occurred to him? Surprised at the old familiar name unheard so long, Fernow gazed in the face of his former servant. It was fearfully pale, and there lay a strange repose in the usually expressionless features.

"Herr Professor"—there was a tone of anguished entreaty in the question—"must you really go quite alone? Can you not take me with you—certainly not?"

"No, I cannot!" said Walter gravely. "What has come over you all at once, Frederic? You have a duty to perform to-night and so have I; to such duties we have both become accustomed since the war."

Frederic heaved a sigh. "I do not know why it is, but, during the whole war I have not felt as I feel to-night. Now, when you are about to go, an icy shudder passes through me. Herr Professor," he broke out suddenly and despairingly, "I certainly shall never see you again!"

Walter gazed silently up to him. How strange it was! even this robust, thoroughly healthy nature, usually so unsusceptible to mental

influences, at this moment seemed over-powered by a presentiment! Was it love for his master that gave him this instinct? He sought to guard himself against showing any weakness, he knew that the slightest token of weakness would quite rob the giant soldier before him of the little self-possession left him, and transform him into a sobbing child.

"You are out of your senses!" he said half displeased, and with a faint attempt to laugh. "Is this the first time that I have gone into danger? You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Frederic! I really believe you are weeping."

Frederic did not answer, but he kept his clear-blue eyes fixed immovably on his master's face; at this moment, with a gift of introspection wonderfully enhanced, he saw that Fernow's glance did not accord with his words; he saw separation in it, and all subordination, all the military usage which for months long he had conscientiously observed, suddenly vanished; he saw before him only his professor whom he had so often nursed in illness, whom he had watched and guarded as a mother guards her child, who to him had been the one goal, the one object of life. He sobbed aloud, and a stream of tears gushed from his eyes.

"Herr Professor," he cried

piteously, "would to God I could be shot down instead of you! A calamity is to happen to-night; I know it. One of us will certainly fall."

Walter smiled sadly and gently; he felt who this one would be; but the touching devotion of his servant in his parting hour, asserted its right. He now forgot all else, but not those long nights of illness during which Frederic had sat at his bedside, with a fidelity and self-renunciation he could never repay and never forget, and—in such a moment all arbitrary barriers fall, all chasms are bridged over—the officer threw his arms around his servant's neck and then warmly and affectionately pressed his hand. "Good-night, Frederic," he said softly, "Good-by! Whatever may happen to me, your future is provided for. Doctor Stephen has the requisite papers in his hands. And now—" he hastily drew himself up "now let me go, it must be!"

Frederic obeyed. He hesitatingly let go the hand which he had held in both of his, and stepped back. Once again Walter waved him an adieu, and then hurried from the room. With bowed head, the poor fellow stole to a window. He saw enveloped in its military cloak the tall figure which, clearly defined in the moonlight, strode over the terrace; he

heard the step grow fainter and fainter in the distance, until its last echo died away. Regretful tears gushed anew from his eyes; with incontestable certainty, he felt that he had seen his master for the last time.

CHAPTER XXV.

TO THE RESCUE.

"ROUSE up, Jane! Do not again refuse to see me, it is a matter of the greatest importance, and I must speak with you!"

With these words, Mr. Atkins knocked violently at the door of Jane's chamber, and compelled an entrance. The bolt was shoved back, and the door opened. A light also burned here. Jane was fully dressed, and a glance at the bed showed that it had not yet been disturbed. She evidently had not thought of sleeping. She advanced to meet him with mournful questioning in her face; her eyes were weak and inflamed from inward excitement, but they bore no traces of tears. Jane did not know that weeping which so often is the woman's only and supremest consolation; she had forgotten it in her childhood. That sobbing into which she had once broke out at the death-bed of her father, when for the moment her strength

had utterly given way, had come over her, wild and passionate, like a convulsion, but tearless. Her rigid, iron nature knew not even the outward signs of weakness; she bore all sorrow as she had seen her father bear it; like a man.

Atkins allowed her no time to utter the question that trembled on her lips. "It is about a danger," he said hastily. "I thought to delay it, to avert it, but it proves greater than I had believed. My power is at an end; you must now interpose."

"What danger?" asked Jane, apprehensive and breathless. "Of what do you speak?"

"Of Alison and Lieutenant Fernow. They have come in conflict; Henry has challenged the Professor, who denies him satisfaction until the end of the war. Henry meditates revenge—they must not meet a second time."

Jane was horrified at this tidings, but she soon recovered her self-possession.

"You are right," she said with intensest bitterness. "They must not meet a second time; a fight between them and for my sake, would be worse than murder. Henry is in error; only one single word is needed to undeceive him; to-morrow I was going to speak that word; now there is not a moment to lose. Summon him here immediately!"

Atkins shook his head. "But Henry is nowhere to be found, I have already searched the whole castle for him in vain."

"And Walter? For God's sake where is Walter?"

Atkins elevated his eyebrows. "Lieutenant Fernow has gone to the mountains," he said gravely, "On some secret service, and alone, Henry knows that. If he follows—Jane, I need not tell you what calamity I fear."

For a moment Jane stood there rigid as a statue; then by a powerful effort, she roused herself from her stupor, and regained the whole decision of her character.

"I know Henry! He must not go until I have spoken with him; we must have him back at any price. I believe"—she placed her hand on her forehead, despite the bewildering anguish, striving to collect her thoughts,—“I believe there is only a single pass leading from here to the mountains. Did they not tell us so this morning?"

"Only one, and the Germans hold that; but Henry will hardly seek that path; he knows that the guards would be sure to repel him."

"So he could only go as far as the path. He must be there; I will seek him!"

Atkins tried to hold her back. "For God's sake!" he cried, "remember that we are in a foreign

land, amid the storms of war; it is night, you could not possibly go alone."

Jane did not listen; she had already thrown her travelling cloak around her shoulders.

"Remain here, Mr. Atkins. If we should all three leave the castle, they might suspect us. You could have no influence over Henry; I must speak to him myself."

She was out of the door, and down the steps, before Atkins' expostulations were at an end. Involuntarily he wrung his hands.

"What an infernal night this is! This blue-eyed German has brought us all three into mortal danger! But Jane is right, I ought not to go out—it is better for them to arrange this among themselves. She must find him in the park. He can be nowhere else."

CHAPTER XXVI.

A MORTAL AGONY.

THE broad, forest-like park of the castle of S. lay bathed in the clearest moonlight and enveloped in the deepest silence, interrupted only now and then by the heavy tread of the patrols, who at the captain's order were pacing up and down. They had finished their round through the principal

avenue, without encountering any suspicious person, and had now separated according to the orders given them, to explore the adjoining thickets and pathways. Frederic took the left, the other two the right, and they were to meet again on the terrace.

Slowly, his musket in hand, Frederic marched forward on the designated way. He needed not to hasten; there was plenty of time; nor to step lightly, a thing always exceedingly difficult for him; he had, as before stated, met nothing suspicious on his round. Frederic was not fitted for any service demanding great intelligence, but he perfectly understood and would conscientiously execute the command to keep his eyes and ears open, to hold the strictest watch possible over all around, and at the slightest disturbance, hasten back to the castle to give the alarm. This responsible service had one great advantage for Frederic; it demanded his strictest attention, and left him no time for unavailing regrets over his master's absence, or troubled apprehensions as to his fate.

He had gone over a part of his beat, and was now close by the statue of Flora, which reared its white, moon-lighted form in the midst of a broad, grassy expanse. It had been particularly impressed upon him not to pass the shell-

covered grotto near by without throwing a sharp glance within. Just as he reached the statue, he paused, and placed his hand on the lock of his musket. But he lowered the weapon even before a cry of alarm had broken from his lips. A long, white dress, beneath a dark travelling cloak, had betrayed a woman's form looming up behind the shrubbery; and as the figure now stepped out into the full moonlight, he recognized Miss Forest.

Frederic's earlier suspicion began to rise stronger than ever; he still clung obstinately to the idea that the strangers were spies, and that the "American Miss" was the most dangerous of the three. Her being a woman was nothing in her favor; no man could excel her in cleverness, and this strange, solitary meeting, gave new ground for Frederic's suspicion.

"What are you doing here in the park, Miss Forest?" he asked mistrustfully. "You should be more on your guard. Our password must be unknown to you, and if it had not been for your dress, I should have shot you."

Jane paid no heed to the warning; she stepped still nearer, and stood close before him. "Is it you, Frederic? Thank God that I have at least, found *you*!" she said.

Frederic was little inclined to

echo this "thank God!" in the ardor of his military duty, he might have repelled her roughly, but remembrance of the words of his master fettered his tongue, and made every harsh tone impossible.

"Go back, Miss!" he said. "You must not remain here, and I cannot allow you to wander around in this way."

Jane seemed to regard the command as little as the threat that had preceded it. "You have looked through the park?" she said excitedly. "Have you not met Mr. Alison?"

Frederic's suspicion grew. Mr. Alison! What business had he here? Was this whole American crew roaming around the park? Something serious must lie at the bottom of all this.

"Mr. Alison is not here!" he said very decidedly. "We have gone our rounds through the park, and if he had been here, we must have seen him."

A sudden terror blanched Jane's face. "Almighty God! I came too late. He must already have found a path!" she cried despairingly. But this was no time to yield to despair, and meeting Frederic had already kindled a new ray of hope in her soul.

"Do you know where your master is gone?" she asked resolutely.

"No, I do not know," replied Frederic crabbedly; "but I tell you now in full earnest, Miss—"

"He is in the mountains," interrupted Jane. "I must go there at once; I must follow him."

Frederic stared at her in utter consternation. "God help me, Miss," he said, "but I believe you have lost your reason! Would you go to the mountains? Among the sharpshooters? You may as well make yourself content, you certainly cannot pass our lines; they are well guarded."

"I know it!" said Jane, "but yet I must go. They will order me back, but you, Frederic, know the pass-word, and must help me through the outposts."

In the excess of his horror, Frederic almost let his musket fall; but he drew himself bolt upright and with an expression of righteous indignation and boundless self-importance, he gazed down upon the young lady.

"Miss Forest," he said very emphatically, "anybody would know you come from that savage, godless America. Such wickedness would never enter the mind of a German Christian man or woman. I must help you through the outposts? Through *our* outposts? And to crown all, I am to give you the pass-word! You surely have no idea of war, or of what a soldier's duty really is!"

Jane stepped nearer to him and her voice sank to a low whisper.

"The life of your master is at stake; listen Frederic,—*your master!* A danger threatens him which does not come from the enemy, of which he has no suspicion, and which I alone know. He is lost, if I do not succeed in warning him. Do you understand now that I must go to him at any price?"

A quiver of pain passed over the soldier's face. "I thought as much!" he cried despairingly. I knew that something dreadful would happen to-night!"

"There will be no dreadful event," said Jane confidently, "if I can only reach your master in season; and I can reach him, if you make it possible for me to follow him. You now know how much is at stake, Frederic; you will help me, will you not?"

Frederic shook his head. "I must not!" he said in a hollow voice.

In despairing entreaty, Jane grasped both his hands. "But I tell you, the life of your master is in peril; without my warning, he is lost! Will you let him die when a single word from you can save him? Good Heavens! Frederic, you must see that here is no treachery, no deception; that only a mortal agony for him alone urges me on. By your love for your master

I implore you, help me through the lines!"

Frederic gazed silently down upon her; he saw and felt the truth of her words; a deathly anguish spoke from her face, entreated from her lips; and this anguish was for his master, concerned only his rescue. There were tears in the poor fellow's eyes; they fell slowly down his cheeks; but he only grasped his musket the more firmly.

"I cannot, Miss Forest! I cannot be false to my duty here; I could not help you through our lines, even to save my master's life. Don't look at me in that way; don't entreat me further! By God above, I cannot do as you wish!"

Jane drew back, and let his arm fall. Her last hope had vanished; the sentiment of duty had more power over Frederic, than even his passionate love for his master. Atkins was right; these Germans were terrible in their iron-sentiment of duty.

"And so Walter is lost!" she moaned faintly.

Frederic shuddered. "Tempt me no further, Miss Forest," he said, "Frederic Erdmann is no traitor!"

Jane trembled at these words. Her wide-open eyes were full of terror.

"What name is that? What are you called?"

"Erdmann! Did you not know that? But you have always heard them call me only Frederic."

Jane leaned against the base of the statue, her breast rose and fell in uncontrollable emotion, her eyes hung upon the man standing before her with an expression that could not be defined; sorrow, anxiety, consternation, all flamed up in that glance, and through all, beamed something like the presage of an infinite happiness.

"Do you know—do you know a young mechanic, Franz Erdmann, of M., who wandered over to France, lived in B., and is now serving in the Prussian army?"

"Why should I not know him?" replied Frederic, surprised more at the strange tone of the question than at the glance which accompanied it. "He is my brother, that is, my foster-brother, as he is usually called."

"And so"—Jane's voice was almost stifled in her terrible excitement—"and so you was that boy whom Erdmann's parents brought from Hamburg?—who grew up with him in M., and after the death of his parents, was adopted by pastor Hartwig! Speak, for God's sake—yes or no!"

"Certainly it was I," replied Frederic. "But where in the world, Miss Forest, did you learn all this!"

Jane did not answer. She sum-

moned all her strength; upon the next question, hung life or death for her.

"And Professor Fernow! He too was reared by pastor Hartwig; but how came he there!"

"Well, it all happened very simply; the pastor took us both into his house the same year. Me first, out of favor and sympathy, because no one else would have me, and a few months later, my master, his sister's son, because his parents had suddenly died, and he had no other relations. As I was already there, he could not very well send me away, and so he kept us both. He did not do it willingly, and we had to pay dear for the bread he gave us; I by hard work around the house, and my master at the writing-desk; the pastor was determined he should be a scholar, but at the first, he would far rather have made verses. Well, all that soon ended; pastor Hartwig kept us well in rein.—God! rest his soul! It did not go well with me until he really was at rest, and my young master, who became his heir, took me in charge. We have been almost twenty years together."

Jane had listened breathlessly, her hands pressed against her heart, which she thought must burst, and yet a stony burden had been lifted from it. The out-cry of happiness that broke from her

inmost soul, was it for the brother found at last, or for him she had so long regarded as a brother! She did not know, but even the thought of Walter's dangers, receded at this moment; she was conscious of only one thing:—the fearful contradiction in her soul was settled; the terrible conflict ended. Whatever might come now, love for Walter Fernow was no longer sin!

CHAPTER XXVII.

TREASON.

"FREDERIC!" She laid her hand on his arm, but Frederic turned suddenly away, and gazed intently in the opposite direction.

"What has happened! Let me go, Miss! There is danger in the grotto over yonder. Who is there? Answer!"

No answer came, but Frederic needed none; he knew enough already. The moonbeams falling obliquely at the entrance of the grotto, had revealed all to him; he had seen dark forms and gleaming weapons. In the moment of danger, Frederic's mental capabilities were not so under par as in common life. Instinct supplied him what he lacked in intelligence, and this always guided him aright.

He did not pause to reflect that his two comrades being much nearer the castle than he, could sooner give the alarm, that the most important thing was to know the direction whence the danger came; but he acted as if he had duly considered all this, and summoning the full strength of his powerful lungs, he cried in a voice that rang through the whole park:

"Treason! An attack! The enemy are here! They come from the grotto! Attention, soldiers!"

Then he fired his musket in that direction, and seizing Jane's arm, bore her along with him. The warning had reached the ear of his comrades, the cry again plainly echoed through the silent night, and this time it must have reached the castle. But the enemy remained no longer idle; further concealment was impossible. Half a dozen shots fell at the same time; Frederic paid no heed, but with a low cry of pain, Jane sank upon her knees.

"Forward, Miss, forward into the bushes!" he cried, and rushed on. Jane tried to follow, but her wounded foot forbade. She sank to the earth.

"Fly!" she moaned breathlessly. "Save yourself! I must remain behind!"

Frederic looked down at her, but he saw not now the white,

beautiful face, which would have plead mightily with any other man for her rescue; he thought only that here was a helpless, wounded woman, whom he must abandon if he sought to save himself. Before his soul, clear as the lightning's flash, gleamed only one remembrance: "Tell him that Miss Forest was the one dearest to me in the whole world! He is to guard her, if he must,—with his life!"

As if she had been a child, the gigantic man lifted her from the ground, and retreated with her in his arms. The conclusion and its execution were the work of a moment. The enemy did not follow these two; to leave that secure retreat would have been madness. But the man who had betrayed them was not to escape unpunished. Shot after shot came from the grotto, and our fugitives on this boundless grassy expanse, in the full glow of this bright moonlight, were a mark for every bullet. Frederic now required threefold time for a path he alone could have trodden in a few moments. Jane had twined her arms around his neck; but even here her resolution did not forsake her; she knew that every movement on her part would retard Frederic's steps, that perfect immobility would lighten his burden, and she lay quiet as the dead in his arms.

Around both hissed the bullets, but the French shot badly to-night; not one hit. All at once Frederic shuddered convulsively, then he halted, and a hollow moan of agony broke from his lips.

"For God's sake, are you hit?" cried Jane, and sought to loose herself from his arms, but with iron strength, he held her fast. Then he went on again, but more slowly, more circumspectly than before, Jane heard the agonized convulsive heaving of his breast, she felt something hot and moist ripple down upon her hand now loosened from his neck; but still he went on. She gazed anxiously into his face, clearly defined in the bright moonbeams, and an involuntary terror came over her; she seemed to gaze into the face of her dead father. Frederic's heavy, unintellectual features at this moment had a truly frightful likeness to her own,—to those others the grave so long had hidden. It was this expression which had all at once ennobled and transfigured Frederic's face, and this similarity also betrayed his origin, more clearly than all other proofs; it was the grim determination, the hard, perverse inflexibility of the Forests, it was their stony defiance even of the impossible.

And he indeed had overcome it, the impossible; he bore her away over that grassy level and a

stretch beyond into the alley, into the secure protection of the trees, and then only did he let her glide from his arms. Meantime, all had become excitement in the direction of the castle; voices rang out, words of command were heard; quick as lightning, the alarm signal echoed back from the village, and at the head of the soldiers quartered at the castle, Lieutenant Witte stormed up the avenue.

"Are they at the grotto?" he cried, recognizing Frederic by his uniform. "Come with us. Forward!"

He rushed on, the others after him; but Frederic did not join them, he did not go forward. For a moment more he stood upright, then he fell heavily to the earth.

With a cry of agony Jane sank down at his side; but over the leather bonds across the soldier's breast, flowed a deep-red tide—the brother had with his life-blood saved his sister!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SACRIFICE OF BLOOD.

AN hour had passed, the fight had proved shorter and less serious than had been apprehended. The enemy, proceeding from the forest and gathering in small numbers at

the grotto, had intended to surprise the castle in which the German officers were quartered, and by capturing them to leave the force in the village without leaders, and an easy prey to the attack of their main body. Frederic's cry of alarm had broken up their plan of moving on in perfect silence to the castle, and the hand-to-hand fight in the grotto had been of short duration. A few French fusiliers had fallen, half a dozen had been taken prisoners, and the others had fled in wild disorder to the forest. By this movement the secret way of egress had been discovered and guarded. A few of the Germans were more or less seriously wounded; none mortally but Frederic, who was to be the only sacrifice.

They had borne him to Jane's chamber and laid him on her bed. She sat at his side. She had represented her own wound as a very trifling one, which had certainly made flight impossible to her, but was not at all dangerous. Doctor Behrend bandaged the foot but avoided any further treatment, he saw that she was in no mood to heed so slight a wound.

Atkins stood at a window of the apartment and gazed in silence at the group. Jane had hastily told him all, and every trace of the old, mocking irony had vanished from his features; the deepest gravity

alone spoke from them now. There lay the man they had so long and anxiously sought, for whose discovery his parent's wealth had been sacrificed, whom his sister had followed over the sea, through the whole Fatherland, even to this place. For weeks long he had been so near to them, and they had both so haughtily looked down upon him; they had wounded the poor fellow by their pride and scorn, they had derided his small abilities and his simple ways. There had fallen to his share none of those rich treasures of knowledge and culture which had been so lavished upon his sister; poor and ignorant, in wretched servitude, he had grown up, and had been thrown upon the cold charities of the world, this heir of countless thousands; and now, the hour that at last revealed the truth, that restored to him riches and a future—was to be but the hour of his death.

Doctor Behrend, to whom Atkins had briefly revealed all this, could give no hope. The wound was undeniably mortal; perhaps it might not have been, if Frederic, immediately upon receiving the ball, had taken refuge in the shrubbery. The terrible effort through which he had carried Jane that long distance, had proved fatal; an internal hemorrhage had ensued, and he had only a short time to live.

The wounded man had been lying in a deep swoon; he now moved, and opening his eyes, fixed them on the surgeon who stood at the foot of the bed.

"It is about over with me, Herr Doctor, is it not?" he asked languidly.

Doctor Behrend stepped nearer him, and exchanged a glance with Jane, whose eyes forbade his giving the true answer.

"Oh no, not so bad as that, Frederic; but you are severely wounded."

Frederic was perfectly conscious; he had seen the glance, and understood it. "You may as well tell me," he said, "I have no fear of death. My master!"—he turned entreatingly to Jane—"did you not say, Miss, that my master was in peril—that he would be lost?"

Jane buried her face in her hands. She was suffering a two-fold torture. The guard doubled, she herself incapable of taking a step forward; her dying brother before her, and perhaps at this very moment Walter had fallen. Her courage was at an end; she yielded to the impossible.

Frederic understood the wordless answer. "Then I do not want to live any longer!" he said calmly but decidedly. "I knew it when he took leave of me, and without him I could not endure life!"

Again he closed his eyes, and lay motionless as before. The physician approached Jane, and bent down to her with a low whisper.

"I can give you one consolation," he said. "The inevitable will happen calmly, almost painlessly. If you have anything to say to him—hasten!"

He left the room to look after the other wounded men, and, at a low word from Jane, Atkins withdrew into the adjoining chamber. The brother and sister were now alone.

She bent over him; his face had regained its wonted expression, only that it was now half lifeless and ghastly pale. He scarce appeared to suffer. The look that had glanced forth at the first mortal danger had vanished, and the family resemblance with it. Jane felt that she must set circumspectly about her task, lest the frail life-tenure be too suddenly riven, and she prepare for him a final anguish instead of a final joy. She had strength for the effort. There was in the whole world but one being who had power to rob Jane Forest of her self-control. Even at the death-bed of her brother, this self-mastery asserted its right. Her decision was made; this brother should not leave the world without the last kiss of his sister.

"Fritz!"

Again he opened his eyes, surprised at the strange appellation; but it seemed to be a tender, melancholy remembrance this name awakened in him, the name Jane had so feared she might hear from Walter's lips. She bent yet lower down to the dying man, and took gently his hand in hers.

"You have spoken to me of your childhood. Have you no remembrance at all of your parents—of the real parents, I mean?"

Frederic shook his head. "Only a little! I remember the great ship we were going to sail on over the water, and how my father let go my hand, and sent me to my mother; how all at once father and mother were both gone, and I stood alone in a narrow street among a crowd of people. I must have screamed loudly and wept bitterly, for I did not become quiet until Erdmann took me in his arms and carried me to his wife. That is all I know."

"And have you never since heard from your parents?"

"Never! They must have died over there in America, or they forgot me. No one has ever cared for me my whole life long—nobody but my master."

Jane clasped his hand more tightly. "Your parents did not forget you, Fritz; they sought for you, and bitterly enough mourned your loss for many years—they

would gladly have given all their riches to have their child once more; but he could not be found."

An anxious, troubled look passed over Frederic's face, he made a vain attempt to raise himself upright in the bed.

"Did you know my parents, Miss?" he asked; "did you ever meet them in America?"

"They are dead!" faltered Jane.

Frederic's head sank languidly back on the pillow.

"I thought so!" he murmured.

She bent close down to him, her breath swept his cheeks, and her voice sank to a whisper,

"When your mother went to the ship, she was not alone, she carried a little child in her arms. Do you remember that child?"

Around his lips vibrated a faint but happy smile. "Yes, my little sister, our Jennie! She must have been very little then, only a few weeks old, but I loved her so dearly!"

"And that sister"—for a moment Jane was silent, voice and strength failed her—"would it give you joy to see her? Shall I show her to you?"

Frederic gazed at her with a foreboding, expectant glance; her eyes, the tone of her voice had already revealed to him the truth.

"Miss Forest—you—?"

"My Fritz! My Brother!" broke out Jane passionately, and

and fell on her knees by the bedside. She did not heed the pain of her wound, she did not feel it at this instant.

But the effect of this revelation was quite other than she had dreamed. The passionate excitement she had feared, did not come; Frederic lay there calm as before, and gazed at her, but there was something like anxiety, like timidity in his glance; he softly withdrew his hand from hers and turned his head away.

"Fritz—!" cried Jane surprised and shocked. "Will you not look at your sister? Do you doubt my words?"

A peculiar emotion, half pain, half bitterness, flitted over his face.

"No, I am only thinking how well it is I am about to die. If I lived you would be so ashamed of me!"

Jane shuddered,—the reproach was just. When she first came to the Rhine, if she had been obliged to embrace Fernow's servant as her brother, she would have been terribly ashamed of him. What a series of conflicts and sorrows, what a fearful sacrifice at the last had been necessary, to wrest this pride from her heart, and create room there for this sentiment which now solely ruled her being, this mighty, irresistible voice of nature! She did not merely know, she felt that this was her brother who lay be-

fore her, the only one of her blood and name, the only one who belonged to her through the holy ties of family; and all the sins which in her imperious pride she had committed against him and others, were punished tenfold at this moment. Her brother himself, at the instant of their reunion, had retained but one remembrance of her; he shrank timidly from her embrace.

Frederic interpreted her silence falsely; he misunderstood even the expression of her face.

"It would be so!" he said calmly but without the least bitterness! "You were never friendly to me, and the very first time I saw you,—I had taken such pains with all those flowers and that nosegay; you wouldn't have a single one of them, and nothing in my whole life ever caused me so much sorrow as you gave me then."

He was silent; but these simple words, with touching, pathetic sorrow, accomplished what all these struggles and tortures, what all this agony and despair had not availed to wring from Jane Forest. A hot stream of tears gushed from her eyes, and she buried her face in the pillows. In loud, heart-rending sobs broke at last the rigid pride with which she had hitherto looked down upon all not her equals in intellect and position; broke the icy strong hardness of her nature, and with it, that mas-

culine strength of will her father had awakened and fostered in her. She wept now as a woman weeps in hopeless anguish and despair, when she sees all waver and fall into nothingness around her. Jane Forest had not been one to be bent—she must be broken.

But these tears, the first since her childhood, had wrought mightily upon her brother's heart, and conquered his painful shyness of her. He saw that this sister was not ashamed of him now; that he had deeply wounded her by such a suspicion, and summoning his last remaining strength, he turned again to her.

"Jenny!" he said softly, and the old-love name fell half shyly, half tenderly from his lips. "Do not be angry with me, dear Jenny! It is all right, my sister. I have at least had one happiness. I have died to save you!"

He stretched out his arms to her, and the lips of the brother and sister met in their first kiss—it was also the last!

When the new day with its first pale beams smiled upon the earth, Forest's son was no longer among the living. Slowly Jane released her brother's lifeless form from her arms, and turned her face to the window. A cold, gray twilight reigned in the death-chamber; but outside, the Eastern heaven was all aglow; the morning, in

blood-red beams, was breaking over the mountains.

What sacrifice had fallen there ?

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MURDERER AND THE ATTACK.

A CLEAR, balmy autumn night lay over vale and upland. The dark, sharply-defined outlines of the mountains stood in such bold relief against the unclouded sky, that every cleft as well as every jagged peak was visible. Higher up the forests dissolved in a sombre, formless mass, over which rested a fleecy mist like shimmering gauze, but at the mountain's base, every tree and shrub was as clearly defined as in the full light of day.

Upon a low, rocky plateau at the entrance of the defile, close by the foot of a giant fir-tree, stood Henry Alison. He had gained some distance upon his rival, and had found the path clear. Nothing of all the wild excitement that ruled there an hour later, now disturbed the silence. Insuperable obstacles often arise in the way of duty and rescue, while crime unrestrained, goes on its way, as if guarded by demoniac powers.

Atkins' words had proved true. Now that Henry's uncontrollable nature had burst its barriers, it

knew no limits. But it broke forth into no wild fury ; the head of the American remained clear and cool. While seeking revenge against the hated rival, he must care for his own safety, and he had assured it. Every one knew that the mountains were unsafe, and the German officer found dead in the morning would be supposed to have fallen by the bullet of a French sharpshooter : such things often happen in war, people would say ; why had the foolhardy man ventured alone, by night, into the mountains ? The guards, who held every avenue would declare that they had let no one pass, and Alison would not be supposed to have left the circuit of the park.

Discovery was impossible, and consciousness augmented Alison's cool, determined composure. He was disturbed by no moral barriers by no ideal scruples of conscience. He had offered his enemy combat on equal terms, and had stood ready to peril his own life. The rival would not consent ; well ! then, let him suffer the consequences !

The situation could not have been better chosen ; Henry stood in the shadow of the cliff, at the foot of the fir-tree and quite concealed by its branches. Right below led the mountain-road and the foot-path. He commanded both with eye and weapon. No

human being coming in the direction of S. could escape him, and Henry's revolver was one that never missed its aim; his skill in shooting had always been the admiration of his associates.

He waited, his eyes fixed upon the opening of the road where Fernow must appear; all his powers of mind concentrated in this breathless spying and listening; what happened near him or behind him did not concern him; he did not hear the low, mysterious mutterings up in the firs.

Deep solitude in the mountains! Only now and then resounds the cry of a bird of prey sweeping over the forest in its slow, ponderous flight, and then vanishing in the darkness. Now and then a gust of wind sweeps over the rocky wall, swaying the tree-tops to and fro. Now the shrubs flutter and nod in the moonlight, now the boughs of the fir-tree rustle softly but uncanonily as if wailing or lamenting.

There, at last! At the winding of the road, looms up a dusky form and approaches slowly but with steady tread. Alison recognizes Fernow's gait and bearing; now he recognizes his features also. He has already reached the rocky plateau, and is about to enter the path gradually winding upward, Alison raises his revolver.

Then, all at once, come shots from another direction. From out

the thicket of firs on the opposite side of the mountain, rush strange forms, and throw themselves in the German's path. He springs aside, firing at the same moment, but the enemy, conscious of superior strength, retreats only for an instant.

Walter is driven against the cliff, and in a moment, he is surrounded on all sides.

Henry stands motionless, the loaded weapon in his hand, and glances upon the tragic spectacle at his feet; Walter still stands upright, leaning against the cliff, but the blood already trickles over his forehead, and he defends himself only with his sword. It is evident that the enemy wish to overpower him living; not a single one makes further use of his musket; as he is protected in the rear they attack him at the front and side; the next moment all will be over.

Henry sees this; he sees also that the horrible deed will be spared him; he need not take this life, it is in any event doomed, for Walter will not yield. Six against one! At this thought a wild, glowing sensation of shame darts through the American's breast: he would have committed the murder with a steady hand, but to look on passively and see it consummated before his eyes, that he cannot do. There is a fearful momentary struggle, and Henry's

noble nature breaks forcibly through hatred and fury, and bears him irresistibly on to help, to rescue.

One shot, and the hindmost of the French sharpshooters lies upon the ground; a second, and the one next him falls also. Confounded, the others pause; they leave Walter, and in their withdrawal give only a better mark for Henry. For the third time! The Frenchmen gaze in horror up the height whence come these solitary, spirit-like balls, every one of which with deadly certainty fells its victim; and as the man they have attacked now rouses himself, and makes use of his sword, the other three take flight. A last shot from the American hisses past them, and the half-audible oath with which one of them lets fall his weapon and gripes at his shoulder, while at a still more rapid pace, he dashes on after his comrades, proves that this last ball has not missed its aim. They all vanish in the fir-shadows on the other side of the path whence they came.

While Walter stands there breathless, he all at once feels himself seized by the arm, and drawn away. "Fly!" whispered a voice in his ear; "they must not suspect there are only two of us."

He followed mechanically; in a few moments they were in the secure shadow of the cliff and the

fir boughs. The rescued man leaned against the trunk of the tree, pale, bleeding, half unconscious, and his rescuer stood near him, grim and silent, but breathing heavily, as if freed from an oppressive burden.

For the present they were safe; from here they could remark every approach of the enemy. They had really had to do with only a few patrols; the Frenchmen did not think of returning; no further trace of them appeared.

"Mr. Alison—is it you!"

"Are you wounded?" asked Alison curtly.

Walter passed his hand to his forehead. "It is of no account!" he said. "One of the first balls must have grazed my forehead. It is nothing!"

Instead of answering, Alison drew forth his handkerchief and reached it to him. He looked on silently while Fernow bound it around his forehead whence the blood trickled down drop by drop; but he did not make the slightest effort to help him.

With his own handkerchief, Walter wiped the blood from his face, then he approached his rescuer, and silently offered him his hand. Alison drew back.

"Mr. Alison," said Walter in a voice thrilled by the deepest emotion, "they did you bitter wrong this evening, and it was your own

countryman that calumniated you. I had more confidence in you than he."

Morosely and coldly, Alison repelled the proffered hand. "Be on your guard with your confidences, Lieutenant Fernow!" he said roughly. "You came within a hair's-breadth of being deceived."

"You have rescued me, rescued me at the peril of your own life. The French fusileers might have discovered you, and seized you. From the manner in which we met two hours ago, I had not expected this. I relied upon your honor, not upon your help! You must not now repel my thanks; in spite of all that lies between us, they come from my full heart, and you will also—"

"Besilent!" interrupted Alison with savage fury, "I wish no thanks; you owe thanks to me least of all!"

Walter drew back and gazed at him in astonishment. Alison's behavior was enigmatical to him.

"*Thanks!*" repeated Alison, with annihilating scorn. "Well, I cannot dissemble, and before you extol me as your magnanimous preserver, you shall know the truth. I stood there not to protect you, but to kill you! Do not recoil from me in this way, Lieutenant Fernow! I was in bloody earnest; my revolver was loaded for you; one step more, and I

should have shot you down. You must thank that attack; that saved you, that alone. When I saw six men falling upon one,—then I took your part."

A deep, momentary silence followed these words. Walter stood there calm, and gazed steadily and gravely at his rival; then he stepped up to him, and again offered his hand.

"I thank you, Mr. Alison," he said; "I thank you even for that confession. Your heart speaks better than your lips, and in spite of all, we can no longer be enemies."

Alison laughed bitterly. "We cannot? You seem to forget that we are not of one origin. According to your German sentimentality, we ought now to fall into each other's arms, and swear eternal friendship. I am constituted otherwise; if I hate, I hate until my last breath; and I hate you, Lieutenant Fernow, because you have robbed me of the one dearest to me in the whole world. Do not believe that I release you from your promise to meet me at the end of the war, or that I will then spare you; do not believe that Jane Forest can ever belong to you. I hold you fast to your word, and to your oath, and if she is to die of this love for you, she shall still be my wife!"

Walter's eyes fell, and an ex-

pression of unendurable agony lay upon his face.

"I did not think of that," he said softly, "I only wished to thank you; but you are right, Mr. Alison; we two are differently constituted, we shall never understand each other.—Farewell,—I must go on!"

"You must go on?" asked Alison in astonishment. "Not further into the mountain! You must have seen how unsafe it is; the French sharpshooters are everywhere."

"I know it. Their main body lies an hour's distance from here. But I must force my way through, if it is possible."

The American stared at him in consternation. "Alone? Wounded? Has this attack not shown you the impossibility of such a step?"

"This very attack gives me courage. It came from below; the French patrols avoid the mountain-road; my way is clear."

"Hardly! You rush on to your destruction, Lieutenant Fernow."

"Well, then," replied Walter, while the old melancholy smile flitted over his face, "another meeting will be spared me, and to you, murder in a duel; for after what has just happened, I will never draw a weapon against you.—But one thing more, Mr. Alison. I do not know how you came past

the guard, and I will not ask you; but I demand your word of honor not to follow me further, and to go back immediately by the path on which you came. I am forced to demand this. Do not refuse it."

Alison gazed at him morosely. "I have nothing more to seek in the mountains," he said; "I will go back immediately."

"I thank you, and now—farewell!"

Walter turned away and vanished in the shrubbery.

Alison gazed after him.

"There he goes, right into the midst of the enemy, with that calmness and those eyes before which mine almost fell. Oh, this German!"—he clinched his hands in savage fury. "I can force her to be my wife, but her heart will never forget him; it cannot,—I understand that!"

* * *

On the evening of the next day, Captain Schwarz with his battalion, which Lieutenant Fernow had now joined, entered S. It had been almost a whole day upon the march, as it had taken the by-road through E., but it brought welcome news. The very next morning, the colonel and his staff, with the rest of the regiment from L. re-enforced and instructed to fall on the enemy if he still obstructed the pass, went to join the other

detachments in S. The regiment had been recalled from its post, and had at the same time received orders to march on to Paris.

CHAPTER XXX.

WAITING.

THE winter had passed. More than six months lay between that eventful autumn night, and the spring day which now poured its sunny magnificence over B. Six months, full of snow and ice, full of new sieges and new triumphs. Now the bloody strife had ended. Overthrown in his last, despairing struggles, exhausted, driven back into the very heart of the country, the enemy at last confessed itself beaten. The last war for the Rhine had been fought; henceforth, new boundaries were to guard the ancient river and the land through which it flowed.

In the Rhine-country the first thunderbolt of war had fallen; here the people had most feared and trembled, most fervently prayed; because here the danger had been most imminent; and it was the Rhineland that was to be first greeted as saviour and conqueror. The trembling hope that had a little while ago followed the departing soldiers, was now changed into shouts of exultation and plans of victory.

The old city of Bonn did not remain behind in the joy of victory, in the festal-splendors that lighted up every town and hamlet. Here, too, banners waved from roofs and towers; windows and doors were garlanded, and a gay, triumphant life ruled over all. The house of Doctor Stephen, which had usually been the first to celebrate a victory, belonged this time to the number of those which, bare and garlandless, with closed doors and drawn blinds, gave token that its inmates were called to lament the fallen. The death of his nephew, and respect for the surviving sister, had this restraint upon the doctor and his wife; but all proper sorrow for Frederic and all fitting respect for Jane, could not hinder the doctor from preparing a private festal reception for his Professor on the morning of his return; and although the house showed no outward adorning, he and his wife had secretly intruded into the professor's apartments, and passed a whole afternoon in decorating them.

At this moment the doctor stood at the top of a huge ladder, in a hard tussle with the obstinate end of a festoon which would not yield to the windings required to form the initials which were to be displayed over the door of the professor's study. The Frau Doctorin stood at the foot of the ladder and indulged in some rather merciless

criticisms as to the artistic capabilities of her wedded lord; now the the spray was too high for her, now too low, now she would shove it to the right, now to the left; at last she declared that the initials were crooked. The doctor rearranged, perspired and growled alternately; but at last he lost all patience.

"You cannot judge rightly down below there, child!" he said angrily "Just go back to the door and look at it from there. The general impression is the great thing to be considered, not strict accordance with mathematical lines!"

The Frau Doctorin, obediently stepped back, but just at that moment when she stood leaning against the door, the better to enjoy that all-important general impression, the door was opened from the outside, and the unexpected visitor, with an outcry of terror and compassion, grasped the old lady who had almost fallen into his arms.

"Herr Behrend," sounded the doctor's voice, in its deepest bass, down from the ladder, "be pleased to remain standing there! That is right! Now tell me if the garland is too high, and if the initials are really crooked."

With a polite apology Doctor Behrend released the old lady from his arms, and stood there immovable to take a look at the decorations in question.

"It is very beautiful, very finely designed, but—"

"I told you so, the general effect is all right!" cried the doctor triumphantly, while with a last stroke of the hammer he fastened a festoon to the door; then he laid aside the hammer, and clambered down the ladder to extend his hand to the younger colleague from whom he had long been separated.

"I came to see if Walter's apartments were in any sort of order," said Doctor Behrend, "and to my great surprise I find them festally adorned. You have attended to this in person—"

"Yes, I am the very man!" said the doctor with great self-satisfaction. "We are not quite through here, but come with me into the professor's sanctum; there you can better admire our work."

With these words he seized Doctor Behrend by the arm and drew him into the study. The professor's "sanctum" differed very much to-day from its appearance when the professor was at work there. Everywhere were traces of the ordering hand of the doctor's wife; the green curtains were thrown back, and through the open window streamed in the full dazzling sunlight. The waiting-table, the walls, even the book-cases were adorned with flowers and festoons, and the whole had an exceedingly festal appearance.

It was very strange, but the young surgeon showed little or no delight over all this; he said something of the very tasteful arrangement, of the kindly feeling that prompted it, but all these tokens of respect to his friend seemed to affect him more painfully than otherwise.

Happily, in the joyous excitement Doctor Stephen remarked nothing of this peculiar constraint. "He will not take it so ill, will he?" he said rubbing his hands in ecstasy. "So entirely without song or garland, the professor was not to enter my house, which of all others has the first right to welcome him. He will meet welcomes enough outside! All B. has blazoned his name on its shield as her hero and poet, and the students are wild with enthusiasm. He is the only one of the professors who has fought with them, and how he has fought! I tell you, colleague, there was exultation enough here whenever your letters or other tidings of him arrived. City and university alike went wild over him, and his poems that you sent us, as your malicious Mr. Atkins would say, like Congreve rockets, set fire to both old and young. Do you know that the university designs giving him a reception?"

"I have heard so, but I shall advise the gentlemen to make no arrangements on his account. It

is very doubtful whether Walter returns."

The doctor in his horror almost let fall the vase of flowers he had just lifted.

"Doubtful as to his coming? Good heavens! we confidently expect his regiment this very morning."

"Certainly! But I fear Walter will not be with his comrades. According to the letter I received from him this morning, he appears to be tarrying behind in H., and to have no intention of coming home."

The doctor sat the vase so violently down upon the writing-table as to break it. "I wish our whole military strength might be brought to bear against this obstinate lieutenant, and force him to come home!" he cried angrily. "And so he is not to return to us! He went away as a sick man, whose life we half despaired of; and now, when he might come back healthy, honored, admired by all the world, he will not come. Doctor Behrend, there is some hidden reason for all this! He might have come with you if he had chosen, but he really flies from B. Why did he always make his military duties an excuse for absence, and now that they are ended, why will he persist in remaining away! Something has happened. Tell me what it is."

"I know nothing about it," re-

plied Doctor Behrend evasively. "Perhaps he dislikes the ovation which awaits him here. You know he could never endure being placed in the foreground."

"Nonsense!" cried the doctor furiously. "He must now step to the foreground. We tolerated that anxious timidity in the scholar; but now when he has launched out under full sail as a poet, we forbid all such whims!"

Behrend shook his head. "Do not cherish too great hopes as to Walter's poetic future," he said. "I very much fear that with the sword, he will also lay aside the poets, then bury himself among his books, shut himself out from the outside world more vexatiously than ever, and in a year's time stand just where he did at the opening of the war."

"He will not do that!" cried the horrified doctor.

"He will; it would just suit his fancy. With all his genius, Walter remains an incorrigible dreamer; his energy is only an impulse of the moment. In moments of excitement and inspiration such natures do and dare all; as soon as the incitement is wanting, they sink back again into their dreaming. Life in its every-day dress is nothing to them, simply because they do not understand it."

"And a delightful thing it must

be to dream away one's life," cried the doctor excitedly pacing up and down.

"Sensible men like you and me, Doctor Behrend, haven't the least idea of the nonsensical things that haunt such a learned, poetic head as Walter Fernow's."

"He needs a spur to effort," replied the doctor, gravely. "He needs an energetic, ardent force to remain daily and hourly at his side, and wrest him from that ideal life, to animate him for the conflict with the world and give him what he does not possess; ambition and self-confidence. If this were granted him, I believe there is no height he might not attain in the long future yet before him. But if an unhappy passion once comes to such a nature—"

Here Doctor Stephen suddenly wheeled around, and with supreme astonishment gazed into his colleague's face. "An unhappy passion!" he cried. "For Heaven's sake, our professor has not fallen in love!"

Behrend bit his lips in vexation. "Oh, not at all! It only occurred to me as a mere supposition."

Doctor Stephen was not so easily satisfied. "You have hinted at the truth," he said, "now out with it; who is the professor in love with? How long since it happened? Why is the love unhappy? I hope it is no French

woman. Are the hindrances on the side of family, national hatred, or what?"

"I know nothing at all about it, my friend."

"You are positively insufferable with your know-nothingness," growled the old doctor. "You know all about this matter and you might confide in my discretion!"

"I repeat to you that my idea is founded upon a mere suspicion. You know Walter's reticence; he has never spoken a word to me on the subject. In any event, I urgently implore you not to take advantage of my indiscretion, and tell the Frau Doctorin—"

"My wife?" The doctor threw a glance at the door, which fortunately, he had closed behind him. "God forbid! That would be to set all the women of B. in an uproar! The professor has already become a hero to our ladies; if now, the nimbus of an unhappy love surrounds him, he will be overwhelmed by their romantic sympathy. Who would have thought this of our timid professor, when he sat here at his writing-desk, and I gave him lectures upon his health, which I warned him was going to ruin physically and mentally! Now he goes to the war, fights, makes verses, falls in love—it is most atrocious!"

"I must go," said Behrend, evidently anxious to shorten the

interview. "You will excuse me for to-day."

"Well, go then!" growled the old doctor. "I can get nothing out of you; but let the professor only come home, and I will set his head right."

The young physician smiled incredulously. "Well, try it!" he said. "I have done my utmost; but that sickly melancholy is beyond my power."

He went, leaving Doctor Stephen very much out of sorts. All his joy in the festal preparations was over, and he said to himself that if the professor really came, he would be hardly in the mood to do justice to the reception prepared for him. All delight in the anticipated surprise was over. Since Frederic's death, everything had gone wrong.

The death of their nephew had come very near to the doctor and his wife. It had been a bitter day for them when the young man who had gone from them as a servant, was brought home in his coffin, as their nearest relative. The sting which ceaselessly tormented Jane, and would allow her no peace, had also its smart for them, when they thought how the sister's child, so long and so anxiously sought, for whose recovery thousands had been sacrificed in vain, had lived as a menial in their own house, without enjoying the slight-

est share of the wealth and the affection that should have been his. And yet, the poor fellow had been so grateful for the little they had given him out of mere kindness! His honest, sincere parting words rang continually in their ears! "You have been very good to me during these three years; if I come back, I will richly repay you; if not—may God reward you!"

In Frederic Erdmann, the servant Professor Fernow had brought with him to B., who would have recognized the lost Fritz Förster? The name his foster-parents had given him had prevented the discovery, and a second change of name had been still more unfortunate for him. If his sister had come back to her relatives as Johanna Förster, it might have led her brother, who knew that his family had gone to America, to a remembrance, to a declaration, which would have thrown light upon all; the foreign name of Jane Forest had made this impossible, and the subordinate position of Frederic had done the rest. The servant naturally had made no inquiries as to her history or her former name; and Professor Fernow, who knew both, in his hermit-like seclusion, kept himself too remote from the doctor to be made the confidant of his family affairs, and of the researches Jane was making. Indeed Jane, having Atkins at her

side, kept these researches as much as possible from her uncle. The chance solution of the whole mystery, which might have occurred at any moment, did not come, and the decisive word had been spoken only in the hour of death. Perhaps all this had been more than a chance; it was not to be. Of this wealth, nothing was to fall to Forest's heir but the splendid monument over his grave, and it was of no avail to Frederic when Erdmann wrote in answer to his letter addressed to him, that, at the last possible doubt, and in the end, word for word all that he had already learned. The debt of the name was justly his due; but it was too late for aught else.

The relations between Jane and her relatives were, if possible, colder than ever, and she did not make the slightest effort to increase their warmth. When, accompanied by Atkins and Alison, she had come with her brother's corpse to B., she had been most kindly and sympathetically received by her uncle and aunt; but she gave this kindness no return. She secluded herself with her sorrow more obstinately than before with her pride, she bore her grief as she was wont to bear all else, alone and silently. The doctor and his wife could not comprehend a sorrow inaccessible to consolation or sympathy, and were more than ever confirmed in

their belief in Jane's heartlessness. In fact, hers was too self-reliant, energetic a nature, to change in a day, or become untrue to its proper character. In the moment of her deepest agony, she had shown her dying brother that she really possessed a heart; but she showed this to none else, and the words Doctor Behrend had spoken of Walter, applied also to her. Her future, too, depended upon a power outside herself; and the few next days would decide whether she would return to the old hardness and reticence, or gradually become that being which one only recognized in her; assert that true nature against which she had fought so long, and which had first asserted itself at the hour of her brother's death.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BALANCE OF POWER.

ATKINS had taken up his abode in B. for the winter; but Alison had left a few days after Frederic's burial. He must have felt that his presence was not comforting to Jane; so he resumed his original plan of travel. He had passed the autumn and winter in a tour through Switzerland and Italy, and now, in the spring, when he had visited the larger cities of Germany, he was about to return to B. The doctor and his wife even now

knew nothing of his relations to their niece. Jane had never alluded to the subject. They only knew that the year of her stay in Germany having expired, and its purpose having been accomplished, she was soon to return to America; that the first of the next month had been fixed upon as the time of her departure. It was delegated to Atkins to inform the relatives that Jane would return as Mrs. Alison, and that it was thought best the marriage ceremony should be performed here in the house of her uncle. The great respect and deference they had always shown the young lady's wealth, now found its reward; they were treated as if really inferiors, not being informed of this most intimate of family relations, until their aid was needed in arranging the necessary preliminaries for the marriage decided upon so long ago.

* *

Alison had arrived at Atkins' hotel, and would remain there for the present; but his manner to-day betrayed nothing of that passionately concealed impatience, which, upon his former arrival in B., had driven him at once to Jane, and subjected him to Atkins' ridicule. He now stood nonchalantly at a window, and gazed indifferently down into the street, as if in no haste at all for the approaching reunion.

Alison at this moment seemed quite another being than on that night when unfettered passion had carried him beyond all bounds. In the last six months he had found ample time to recover his equanimity, and he had perfectly succeeded in the effort. He was again the calm, formal man of business with the cold, calculating glance and the conventional polish. That which lay dormant under all this, and had once so dangerously come to the surface, had now sunken back into the depths. His face looked as if it had never known an emotion, only one trait remained; that expression of inimical hardness and cool determination which had first appeared at that meeting in S.; it was yet in his face; it stood firmly engraven there as if during those six months it had not for an instant left his features.

"You come very late, Henry," said Atkins, who stood near him. "We expected you sooner."

Alison turned and gazed at him. "We! Do you also speak in Miss Forest's name?"

Atkins evaded the answer. "You ought to have come sooner," he repeated gravely. "It was not considerate in you to leave Miss Jane here amid all these rejoicings over the victory, which must have made her loss only the more bitter. We might, all three of us, have

been on our way to America long ago."

Henry gave an indifferent shrug of the shoulders. "My travelling plans admitted of no change," he said, "and besides, I had an idea you would all be thankful for the delay. Doctor and Mrs. Stephen are not yet informed, are they?"

"I have just told them."

"Well, after an interview with my betrothed, I wish to be introduced to them as a future relative. The three weeks from now to the beginning of next month will suffice for all necessary preparations, and we shall leave immediately after the ceremony. You are aware of my arrangements with Miss Forest?"

"She has told me that she leaves all to your decision, and that I have simply to consult you in regard to the arrangements."

He turned again to the window. Atkins was for a while silent, but all at once he laid on his hand Alison's arm.

"The regiment is expected back to-morrow, Henry!" he said.

"I know it!" returned Alison, not moving from his place. "And Professor Fernow is coming in any event," continued Atkins, with marked emphasis.

Henry glanced at him calmly. "Do you know this so certainly?"

"He surely will not remain away

from a reception that is especially designed for him."

"He will not come!" said Alison coolly. "After what has passed between us, he does not enter this house while my betrothed remains in it, or I do not understand the German sentiment of honor."

Atkins looked at him doubtfully. "Well, I was not a witness of your interview," he said. "You must know what is to be expected of him; but if he really remains away are you just as sure of Miss Forest?"

Henry did not answer; he merely smiled in his ill-omened way.

"Supposing she should refuse to fulfil her promise to you?"

"She will not refuse."

Atkins did not seem to share his decided conviction. "You may find yourself in error," he said. "Jane is no longer in that hollow stupor that was upon her at our first arrival in B. She is silent as usual, but I know that all her strength of mind is now directed towards one conclusion; and this conclusion will hardly be blind submission to your will. Look before you!"

Henry smiled again, and it was with almost a sympathetic glance he looked down upon the man who warned him.

"And do you really believe I would have gone on my travels, and have calmly remained half

a year away, if I had not previously secured myself on all sides?—I challenged Professor Fernow; he put me off until the end of the war; his promise now binds him, and as the injured man, the first shot is due me. Miss Foster knows this; she knows also that I will shoot him down, if she does not unconditionally submit to what I think best. The choice was given her at that time when the death of her brother led her to ask from me a delay of the marriage until the proper period of mourning had expired. I allowed her ample time, for I knew that I need fear no change of her mind. *His* life was at stake! Through that apprehension I hold her more firmly than by a tenfold cord; she will not venture to resist my will, not even by a word; she knows the price of his safety."

Atkins gazed at him almost in horror. "And will you really force her consent in this way? Be on your guard, Henry! Jane is no woman to allow herself patiently to be sacrificed; she will revenge her blighted happiness upon you. You purchase that longed-for million with hell in your house."

Alison's lips curled in scorn. "Give yourself no anxiety as to our future married happiness, Mr. Atkins! I believe that I am in all respects a match for my future wife. —But it must be time for us to go

to Doctor Stephen's. May I ask you to get ready?"

Atkins lingered a moment. "Henry," he said entreatingly, "whatever may happen between you two, spare Jane; she has fearfully suffered in these last months."

"Has she spared me?" asked Alison with an icy coldness. "The proud Miss Forest would have cast me aside as a worthless burden, had not another's life rested in my hands. Now I have the power and I will use it; the obstinate woman shall yield to me at my price!"

Atkins sighed deeply as he went into the next room for his hat and gloves. "What a marriage this will be! God pity us when these two are man and wife!" he said.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE BRAND FROM THE BURNING.

THE formal part of the visit at Doctor Stephen's house was over. Alison had saluted the doctor and his wife, and exchanged with them the inevitable polite phrases, questions and answers; but this time he betrayed no glowing impatience to shorten the interview; he waited calmly until Atkins ended it, and conducted him to Jane, who although she knew of his arrival, had remained in her chamber.

Here, too, there was a cold, polite

greeting, a few words in relation to the journey, the arrival, the different places of interest on the route; then Atkins withdrew. Henry and Jane were left alone.

She again sat opposite him as at that time when he had sued for her hand; but she was paler than then; she had become so much paler during this winter, but in this long space, she had regained complete mastery over herself. Her head was again upright, her features firm and cold, and her eyes met his with the old glance of defiance. This was not the bearing of intimidation or submission: Atkins was right; she would dare one more last conflict.

"*Why this useless struggle? I will not let you go!*"

Perhaps Jane read this thought in his face, for her brow grew dark, and her lips compressed. These two beings so soon to be united forever, stood now as hostilely arrayed, the one against the other, as if this were to be a struggle for life or death. Both knew it, they were equals in energy, in strength of will, in inflexibility; not a foot's breadth would one yield to the other, and now it remained to be proved whose will was the stronger.

Henry had already arranged his tactics; he enveloped himself wholly in that cold politeness she had shown at the first greeting.

"I come, Miss Forest," he said,

"to demand the fulfilment of a promise which I received a year ago, and which was repeated to me in this place. Your time of mourning for young Mr. Forest must now be at an end, and I must beg you to name the day for our union. Mr. Atkins wishes exact information so as to arrange all formalities for the marriage, and I too have various preparations to make for our departure. We had decided upon the first of next month; but the day and the hour, as well as the manner of the ceremony, are of course left to your decision. I await your commands."

Jane sighed deeply. He had entered upon the subject in a masterly way; he had made all evasion impossible, but still he was not to win the victory so easily.

"You have my promise, Mr. Alison, it is true, and I am ready to fulfil it, if, after what has come to your knowledge, you dare demand such a thing."

Word and glance, alike ineffectual, glided off from the icy indifference with which Alison had armed himself. He remained perfectly calm.

"And why should I not dare to demand a hand which was freely promised me, and would just as freely have been mine, if it had not been for that—*episode*, which is of very little import in my eyes? Miss Forest is too precious

a treasure to be sacrificed for a mere romantic infatuation. I, at least, have no mind to make any such sacrifice."

"You forget one thing!"—Jane's voice involuntarily betrayed the fearful excitement that had taken possession of her whole being.—"Hitherto, you have had the power to torture me, but from the moment of our marriage, that power will fall to me. A woman can become a curse to her husband, if he has taught her to hate where she ought to love.—Force me to this marriage, and I become such a curse to you!"

But even this threat, so defiantly hurled at him, glanced powerless from that smooth, icy calm; Henry smiled at this as he had before smiled at Atkins' words.

"I hardly think we shall continue upon American soil, this romance, into which German sentimentality has drawn us against our will; the atmosphere there is not suited to such extravagances, we had better leave them behind here. I am convinced that Mrs. Alison will as brilliantly represent my house, and as unconditionally play the first role in the social circles of our city, as Miss Forest once did. To enable her to do this, she will find surroundings worthy of her, and a husband whose name and position will do her honor. Our marriage could certainly never

have become a shepherd's idyl, and it need not become a tragedy; if you, Miss, have an intention to play a tragic part here, you will have to do so alone; for myself, I have not the slightest capability for such roles."

Jane trembled under this irony; she felt that Henry was not accessible on this side, and she felt also, that he was now making her atone for the haughty "*I will not*," she had once flung at him. Not in vain had Atkins warned her against this man, who never forgot nor forgave an injury even though he appeared so to do. He was now seeking his revenge, and Jane knew that she could reckon upon no pity; but this certainty, all at once, gave back her presence of mind. She rose resolute and cold, and there was an expression of contempt upon her lips. She must have foreseen the uselessness of this last effort; she had other, and in her opinion, more infallible weapons at command.

"Before we dwell upon this point," she said, "I beg you listen to a proposal I am about to make you."

Henry also had risen; he bowed assent.

"You know that since my brother's death, I have become sole heir to my father's fortune. His will also gives me full, lawful control of all."

"Certainly!" returned Henry, in astonishment, he had no idea where this would end.

"Well, then, I am ready to make over to you the whole fortune as the price of my freedom."

Alison started back, he had all at once become pale, and his glance, with a mysterious, threatening expression, fixed itself full upon her face.

Jane stepped hastily to her writing-desk, and drew a paper from a portfolio lying there.

"I have already drawn up the necessary paper; you will see from it that I keep back nothing except what is in my hands at this moment. It is a sum sufficient to afford me a support here in Germany, but scarcely worth mention in comparison with that which will fall to your share. The legal execution of this may take place any day, whenever you wish; the transaction naturally remains a secret to all save those immediately interested. I offer you all I possess; only leave me free!"

She reached him the paper. Silently Alison took it from her hands, silently he read it through; the paleness of his face grew yet deeper, and the paper rustled strangely in his hands. At last he laid it deliberately upon the table, and crossed his arms.

"Before all else, I request you, Miss Forest, to change the tone

in which you see fit to speak to me. One does not meet a man who holds one's whole future in his hands, with such—contempt."

A hasty flush passed over Jane's face; her voice had unwittingly betrayed her sentiments as she made this proposal. "I do not see," she replied, "why we should seek to deceive each other. You won me for my fortune and hold fast the hand upon which it depends. I would relieve you from a troublesome appendage to this fortune, and myself from a hated tie. You are merchant enough to appreciate the advantages of my offer; and I have lived long enough in America to take into account the value it will be to you there."

Jane did not dream what a fearful game she was playing at this moment, and she did not suffer herself to be warned by the low, hissing sound that again came from Henry's lips, as upon that evening, when he had listened to her conversation with Walter. His calmness quite deceived her.

"I doubt it, Miss Jane; your proposal is too German for that. With us, at home, one does not throw away a million to escape a marriage! Besides, I scarce believe that you clearly understand what it means for one like you, reared in the lap of riches, to be really poor!"

Jane proudly lifted her head.

"My father was once poor," she said, "and he thought nothing of sacrificing position and a future, for the joys of freedom; I give up his riches for like object. I too would be free!"

"Would you really?" Alison fixed his penetrating glance upon her, and there was a tone of annihilating irony in his voice. "And besides, do you think that in case of necessity you could live upon a professor's salary? May I ask if Herr Fernow has a share in this romantic decision? If not, I advise you not to assume too much from his ideality. The heroine of his romance was an heiress, and his sentiments might grow cold if she were suddenly to appear before him poor."

Jane eyes flashed; she forgot all discretion, forgot how fearfully this man had once already made her atone for an insult; his irony robbed her of all self-control.

"Do not measure such a nature by your own standard, Mr. Alison! Walter Fernow is not *your* equal!" she said.

This was too much! The deep, deadly contempt in her words tore away the mask under which, hitherto to his own self and to her, he had feigned indifference. He gnashed his teeth in rage; still he controlled the storm of passion; but it was only for a few moments.

"Not my equal! You are very

honest, Miss Jane. In your eyes, Professor Fernow has perhaps no equal in the world, and you would never have dared approach him with the proposal to sell his bride for money. Keep your indignation to yourself, I see that your whole nature rises in arms at the very thought. You dared not propose it to him, but you have to me!" Here the self-mastery ended, and the old, uncontrollable passion broke forth fearfully from its depths.—"You have dared make this proposal to *me*! You suppose that I would take part in such an infamous transaction! You dare treat Henry Alison as if he were an extortioner, whose word and honor were to be sold for dollars! Jane Forest, by Heaven you shall answer to me for this insult!"

Jane drew back, she gazed at him in consternation. She had not been prepared for such a reception of her proposal.

Henry snatched the paper from the table, and furiously tore it in pieces. "With this wretched bit of paper you would purchase your freedom, and hurl the money and your contempt after me. Forever and eternally you have seen in me only the moneyed man. It may be that it was calculation that led me to you, but you soon enough taught me to reckon with another factor than the dollar. I have loved you, Jane loved you to madness, and I

loved you only the more ardently the more coldly you repelled me, up to the moment when that blue-eyed professor crossed my path, and I learned to hate you both. You know nothing of my interview with him, only what I have told you myself; you do not dream what passed between us that night your brother died. Well, then, I meant to murder him because he denied me the duel. This money lover had carried his calculations so far that he forgot all, that he risked life, honor and future, for the sake of one treasure they sought to wrest from him. Do you now understand, Jane, what you have been to me, and why I now hold you fast? I know that I have no happiness to expect from you, that my house will be to me a hell; but I also know that no power on earth can tear you two asunder unless it is my arm. And my arm shall do it; let it cost you your whole inheritance, let it cost me my last dollar, I fling both from me, but he shall not have you!"

He tore the paper into bits and threw the pieces scornfully away; then he strode excitedly to the window and stared out with face turned away from her.

Jane stood motionless, horrified, bewildered, by this wild outbreak of an emotion she had never suspected in Henry. For the first time he showed her this aspect, and deep

in her heart she felt it was the true one, and she felt also with burning shame the wrong she had done him ; but through it all, this shame and horror, broke softly and faintly a ray of hope ; she knew that the woman is all-powerful when she is beloved.

Henry felt a light touch on his shoulder ; when he turned around, Jane stood right before him, but the obstinacy and the contempt had vanished from her manner ; she had lowered her head as if conscious of guilt, and her glance was fixed upon the floor.

"I did you wrong !" she said softly, and almost an entreaty lay in her tone as she added, "I did not think that you could love."

Henry drew back ; there came over him a suspicion of what was before him, and his brow grew yet more dark, his features yet more hard, his whole manner expressed grim, icy repulsion.

"Enough of confession !" he said roughly. "I request you once more, Miss Forest, to name the day of our nuptials. I expect your answer,—expect it immediately."

Jane yet stood before him with downcast eyes ; now she suddenly laid both hands on his arm.

"Henry."

He trembled, and turned away.

"You have set a cruel choice before me, and fearful was the threat with which you forced me

to silence, him to inaction. His life and my future now lie in your hands alone, Henry.—Give him back his unfortunate promise, and me freedom !"

With a violent movement he flung back her hand. "What do you mean by that tone, Jane ? Do you think to compel me with it ? Have you gathered nothing other from my words than that I would now play a magnanimous role and lead you to his arms ? Not a word further, not a single word more, or—I forget myself !"

The forbiddal sounded wild and threatening enough, but it remained without effect ; Jane was now conscious of her power ; she felt no further fear.

"I no longer offer you my wealth, and all else I have to give, belongs to another. I can compel nothing from you, purchase nothing from you ; well, then, I now entreat you ; Henry, for your own salvation and for mine, release me from my promise !"

She had fallen on her knees before him, her voice trembled in anguished entreaty, in soft, moaning supplication, such as he had never before heard from these lips ; the large dark eyes gazed upon him full and steadily, they were full of burning tears ; her whole manner was so entirely changed, so different from the Jane Forest he had hitherto known, that for the first

time, at this moment, Henry felt what he was to lose with her.

"*At my feet!* I might be proud of the triumph did I not know too well whom I must thank for it! Miss Forest once would sooner have taken upon herself a whole life full of torture and wretchedness, would sooner have died even, than allow a word of entreaty to fall from her lips. But *his* happiness is at stake, *his* future, and here she can take a thousand humiliations upon herself; and even if her pride bled from a thousand wounds, she could entreat, kneel even—and this she would never have done for herself.—Would you, Jane?"

This time, Jane remained proof against his irony; she felt only the infinite bitterness whence it came, felt that through all his grim resistance, her triumph was fighting its upward way.

"Yes," she said softly, still keeping her eyes fixed upon him.

He bent down to her, and lifted her gently in his arms. Those arms clasped the slight, delicate form as if they would hold it fast forever, and with strong, irresistible might he pressed her to his heart. His face was again distorted by all the tempestuous passion that had raged through its lineaments on that autumn night; his breast rose and fell as if in fearful conflict; but it was something nobler

than fury or revenge that now plowed up the very soul of this man; it was a dumb, torturing sorrow, pulsing through his whole being, and stirring it to its inmost depths.

Jane saw the conflict, and had no heart to go on with her entreaties. She felt that a word from her would decide all, and yet she was silent. Her head sunk unre-sisting, upon his shoulder, but two heavy tears rolled slowly from her eyes down upon his hand.

Then suddenly, she felt Henry's lips, hot and burning, against her forehead; it was a kiss so unlike that first kiss she had received from him; it burned like a fiery brand upon her forehead. "Fare-well!" vibrated in a half-stifled, yet ardent tone, through his voice. Then he let her loose from his arms. With this one word, he had freed her, renounced her forever!—When she glanced up, he had already left the room.—She was alone.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

SPRING upon the Rhine! How many a heart with fond, irresistible longing reverts to this thought! The spring comes everywhere. In the storms and billows of the ocean,

in the soft, aromatic breath of leafy forests; in raging, devastating freshets from the mountains, in the blossoming splendors and jubilant lark-songs of the plain;—but nowhere does it so smile as here, by the cradle of German romance, where a breath of poesy hovers over all. The spring glides through the Rhineland, laying lightly her hand in blessing upon field and vineyard; and the blessing becomes a consecration. She floats sun-kissed, over forest and rocky cliff, and glances smiling down from hoary castles, gray with age. But never had the German spring been so greeted, so enjoyed as now, when she came bringing to a united people the festival of resurrection and of victory;—and peace to the world.

This spring had come to the land prematurely and unannounced, as if in haste to greet the new empire with its sunshine and its flowers. B., that “learned nest,” was to-day full of joy and exultation, for it was to receive its university professor, Fernow, as a military hero; but the town being the centre of all rejoicings, its environs were silent as the dead. The day was magnificent, and yet the gentleman and lady who were climbing the path to the Ruenberg, seemed the only pedestrians far and near. Was it through accident or intention? Jane Forest had to-day, for the

first time, laid aside her deep mourning; her dress was still sombre and without ornament, but it was no longer of that sable, hopeless black, and it almost seemed as if with the gloomy dress had vanished that stony, melancholy expression which, during the whole winter, had shadowed her face. There brooded over this face something like a breath of the spring; a tender, longing hope timidly ventured forth from beneath the scarce-broken icy covering, but had not as yet courage to look happiness and the future full in the face. There was a strange, wholly new expression on these once proud, resolute features, and it gave the face something which despite its beauty had hitherto been wanting—gentleness.

Mr. Atkins, who trudged along at the young lady's side, looked very grim and morose to-day; he seemed to feel this splendor of the spring a personal affront. Everything he saw annoyed him, and he was still more annoyed by what he did not see. He could not understand why this tender green had started forth so soon; it must certainly be destroyed by the night-frosts. This preposterous shining of the spring sun with a real June heat, only portended speedy and violent rains, and the Rhine, just now, was the object of his utter and supreme aversion. As Mr. Atkins walked along its banks, it

had taken the liberty to wet his boots through and through, and had also shown an ardent longing to draw his whole person down into its watery depths, things which naturally excited the American's bitter ire.

"Your blood-thirsty Rhine grasps after every strange nationality that ventures near it!" he growled, and at that moment, he made up his mind to remain no longer upon this hated soil. "The sooner we return to America the better!" muttered he.

Jane paid little heed to Mr. Atkins' outbursts of ill temper, and she made due allowance for them all. She very well knew that their sole reason lay in the hollow thunders whose reverberations were heard even here, and which announced the return of Walter Fernow, the university professor and hero.—But as Atkins began to groan anew over the difficulties of the path and the excessive heat, Jane said with a touch of impatience.

"You should have remained in the town. My mourning excludes me from all share in the festivities. I did not wish to force my uncle and aunt to remain at home on my account, and so I undertook this walk. But no such consideration restrains you, and I need no escort to-day."

Atkins drew down his face. "I

cannot say that I feel myself irresistibly drawn toward the city," he said, "where every little urchin you meet on the street is babbling of the 'new power,' and every student demands that I shall make my most humble obeisance to the genius of united Germany. These people are lost in admiration of themselves? Their beloved Rhine has become to them the one river of Germany, and they dream of enlarging its boundaries still more. German idealism is really beginning to become practical; but for these last weeks I have been so persistently entertained at all the clubs and societies with the prospective greatness and glory of the new empire, that I feel as if I would like, just for a little while, to hear something else spoken of. I wish—" Happily, just here he recalled the sharp reprimand he had once received from Jane, so he changed his pious wish into a sigh—"I wish I was back in America; but after all that has happened here in the fatherland, our Germans there will be so puffed up with conceit and vanity, that there'll be no getting on with them!"

Jane smiled at this outbreak of bitterness, and calmly replied:

"You will have to make up your mind to recognize the new power, Mr. Atkins, difficult as it may be to you. Nothing can now be changed, and you will at last recon-

cile yourself to paying some homage to our newly awakened German genius in your own land."

"*Our? Your land?*" drawled Atkins. "Ah, yes! I keep forgetting that you have wholly and entirely gone over to the Germans, and are full of enthusiasm for your new countrymen. Well, just here we differ. I don't understand, Miss Jane, how you can enjoy the prospect here, the sun dazzles one so horribly, that one can see nothing but its beams; the river glares up at you so as to give you pains in the eyes, and this old wall glares at me just as if it would afford it an especial pleasure to fall down and crush us both. Just look before you!"

Jane made no answer; she sat down and left it to her companion to rail at the sun, the river and the ruin as much as he liked; but as Mr. Atkins found nothing more in his surroundings, over which he could growl, he came to her side.

"I only regret," he said, and the expression of his face betrayed how maliciously he rejoiced over it—"I only regret that B. must to-day be deprived of its principal hero. Lieutenant Fernow is really not with his regiment; the garlands with which Doctor and Mrs. Stephen have taken such a world of pains must wither, the stupendous reception which the students had planned must, like their enthusiasm,

result in nothing; the learned salutation speeches of his colleagues will become somewhat antiquated. I am convinced that one of these evenings the professor will step quietly in at the back door, and the next morning will be found sitting at his writing-desk, pen in hand, placidly as if nothing had happened. That would be just like him, I think; he is the only German who now seems to have the least bit of sense left him."

Atkins, taking advantage of Jane's unusually gentle mood, ventured to speak a name which, during the whole winter, had not been mentioned between them, and he had his reasons. They had begun to treat him as they treated Doctor Stephen, to keep him in entire ignorance of the course of family affairs, revealing nothing to him until it was absolutely settled. This vexed him beyond measure; he wanted to know what had passed between Henry and Jane, wanted to know how matters really stood, and as he could venture no direct questions he tried this manoeuvre.

But he missed his aim. Jane certainly blushed when Fernow was mentioned, but she remained calm and did not open her lips. It required more than the mere mention of a name to rob her of her self-possession. Atkins saw that no subterfuge would avail him; he must advance openly to his goal.

"Our travelling arrangements will perhaps require some change!" he began again in his sharp, searching tone. "Henry's sudden departure has disarranged all our plans; I have not been told,—I certainly have not been informed," he added with an irritation that showed his sensitiveness on this point, "why he last evening stormed so violently into my lodgings, demanded his travelling effects, and immediately drove to the station—and in such a humor too that I thought it best to keep as far away from him as possible; but, for my own interests I would now like to ask you, Jane, what you think of all this."

Jane's glance fell. "You are the first to inform me of Henry's departure," she said. "Did he leave no line for me?"

"No! not even a good-by; he declared that he should return to America on the first steamship that sailed from Hamburg."

Jane made no answer, but a deep sigh escaped her breast which had in it more of sorrow than relief.

"What had you done to Henry, Jane?" asked Atkins in a low voice, as he bent down to her. "He looked terribly when he came from you."

She glanced timidly up, but her voice was subdued and unsteady. "You always declared that he cherished a passion for me," she said. "I had never believed it. I

thought the dollar the only divinity to which he knelt."

"It will perhaps be so in the future!" replied Atkins dryly. "Such weakness overpowers a man like Henry but once. He should have held to his American traditions; then the heir and future chief of the house of Alison & Co. would have received no refusal. It is not well, this mixture with German blood; you yourself very well see that now, Miss Jane, and Henry evidently has had enough of your German romances to last a lifetime. But his is not a nature to burden itself with an unhappy love for any long time, and I do not doubt that within a year's time we shall hear of his marriage with one of our home heiresses."

"Would to God it might be so!" sighed Jane from the deepest depths of her heart, as she rose and stayed her arm against the wall.

For some moments, Atkins stood near her in silence. "Shall we continue our walk?" he asked at length. "This old castle is doubtless very interesting, but there is a draught about the romantic, mediæval haunt. I think we had best return to the sheltered valley."

"I shall remain!" declared Jane with her usual positiveness. "But I will not allow you to expose yourself longer to this 'romantic draught.' You will of course di-

rect your walk to M. and we shall meet upon our return."

The hint was plain enough, and Atkins very readily accepted it. He thought it inexpressibly dull up here, and gladly availed himself of any excuse to withdraw.

"I have an idea that I shall have to return to America alone," he muttered to himself, as he took a by-path leading directly down into the valley. "And besides, I am to have the extraordinary pleasure of sending Mr. Forest's whole fortune across the ocean. The fortune Henry Alison made the object of all his energies and calculations, and which is now to fall into the lap of this German professor who was stupid enough to care nothing at all about it, and who would have married unhesitatingly upon his professor's salary! And he will have a brilliant career in the world—there is no doubt of that. They are now lauding him as the future poet, and there must be something in the uproar his verses cause. If a million stands behind them, and a wife like Jane sits near him—all this will urge him on more surely and speedily to the wished for goal. Our deceased Mrs. Forest would have been triumphant; but I'd like to know what Mr. Forest would say at seeing his riches exclusively in German hands and subserving German interests. I believe he would"—here Mr. Atkins bethought

himself, and concluded with this emphatic ejaculation—"I believe he would say amen to it!"

Jane had remained behind alone. She drew a deep breath as if relieved of a heavy restraint, and sat down again in the old place. The bright spring radiance fell around the gray, ancient ruins of the castle, while above and beneath them, throughout all the landscape, reigned a thousand-fold life of fragrance and blossoming. The ivy again wove its green meshes around the dusky stone, and let its wavy tendrils flutter far out over the abyss. At her feet, lay a grassy expanse bathed in the sun's golden lustre, while far beyond flashed and shimmered the dear home river, as if only hours had passed since that day when they two had sat here; as if autumn and winter, with all their tears and conflicts, with their melancholy symbols of mourning, had been only an evil, oppressive dream.

And, as at that time, the gravel now creaked under advancing footsteps. Could Atkins have come back? Impossible! This was not his calm, deliberate tread. It came nearer; a shadow fell upon the sunny space before her; Jane sprang up, brow and cheeks suffused with a treacherous glow, trembling, incapable even of a cry of surprise. Walter Fernow stood before her!

In eager haste he had climbed the hill, but this time, he did not arrive breathless and exhausted, as once from his most quiet walks; such exertion was now sport to him, and it must have been something quite other than fatigue, which at this moment stopped his breath and sent that deep flush to his face. He would fain hasten to Jane's side, but he paused suddenly and gazed silently on the ground; it seemed as if with the old student's dress which he had to-day for the first time resumed, the old timidity had returned.

"Professor Fernow—you here?"

A shadow of painful disappointment passed over Walter's face; perhaps he had expected a different greeting. The deep flush vanished and the old melancholy expression again darkened his features. Jane had meantime in a measure recovered her self-control, although she could not overcome the agitation that thrilled her frame and gave a treacherous vibration to her voice. "I—we heard that you were not with your regiment; my uncle and Doctor Behrend at least declared that you were not," she said.

"I did not come with my comrades; I arrived an hour ago. Doctor Stephen and his wife were not at home, and I was not in the mood to enter at once into the festivities. I undertook this walk; it accidentally led me here—"

His face betrayed the untruth! He had incidentally heard at the house that Jane was not at the festival, and it was not without good reasons that he had undertaken this walk so immediately after his arrival. It had perhaps been more presentiment than accident which had led him here. Jane might have felt this, the flush upon her face deepened, and the dark lashes sank slowly, while her trembling hands sought a point of support in the wall. Walter hesitatingly approached.

"I have frightened you!" he said in a subdued voice. "It was not my intention to return so suddenly; I felt that I could not for the present come to B.; but a meeting I had with Mr. Alison—"

"With Henry!" cried Jane in painful apprehension. "Did you speak with him?"

No, I only saw him! He arrived last night at the hotel in K., where I had taken lodgings; we met upon the stairs, but he passed me silently and morosely, without greeting, and as if he did not know me. This morning a note was brought me with tidings that the gentleman who had left it had already gone; it explains the reason of my being here so soon."

He handed her the note; it contained only a few lines.

"I release you from your promise to meet me after the close of the

war; there is need of no such meeting. In future, the ocean will lie between us, that secures to you the fruit of your victory. I do not hinder your return to B. There you can demand an explanation of what has happened. In a few days, I leave Europe forever.

“Henry Alison.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE RIDDLE SOLVED.

JANE held the sheet silently in her hand; her eyes were veiled as if by starting tears. It is never a matter of unconcern to a woman to see a heart bleeding for her sake, least of all if she is the first and the only one who has taught this proud, cold heart to feel.

Walter's glance rested searchingly upon her face; it was sad, and painfully intent, as if from torturing unrest.

“I must now entreat the explanation, and yet, I do not know whether Miss Forest will be inclined to give it. When we met for the last time, on that day of my return from L. with Frederic's corpse, Mr. Alison stood between us, and held your hand in his, firmly, as if by this one act he would assert his right to all the world. He need not have thought it necessary to deprive us in so decided a manner of all opportunity to be

alone; the moment forbade any word but of sorrow for the dead; we both alike lost much in him.”

Gently but excitedly Jane shook her head. “You lost only a servant, Professor Fernow,” she said. “The lot of my brother was one of cruel servitude from his earliest youth, and destiny would have been still more cruel to him had he not found in you a good master. I—did not make things easier for him while it lay in my power, and later, I could give him nothing—nothing but the cold marble above his grave!”

Walter now stood close to her; gently he took her trembling right hand in his. “And the last embrace of a sister!” he said softly.

Jane's lips quivered in bitterest sorrow. “He paid dearly enough for it,” she said; “he had to buy it with his life-blood. If I had not been near him in that hour he might have come back healthy and merry with the others; my rescue was his destruction. I bring only sorrow to all that love me; I had to give death to my brother; I had to make Henry wretched—keep far from me, Professor Fernow, I can give you no happiness!”

With a convulsive movement she stepped to the edge of the balustrade, and with averted face gazed out into the distance. Frederic's death still threw its shadow over her life; the shadow would

not lift, she could not overcome her remorseful sorrow. Something of the old hardness and bitterness again lay upon her features, and the anguish which thrilled through them and would scarce yield to control, only too well betrayed how serious she had been in those gloomy words before which at this moment, all hope, every dream of the future, sank into nothingness.

“Johanna!”

It was again that tone which once before in S. had wrought so mightily upon her heart, lifting it above all sorrow and all conflict; it compelled her now to turn round, to glance up to him; and when she met his eyes, hardness and bitterness could no longer hold their ground before these blue depths which once more spoke to her in that language of dreamy tenderness now as then holding her spell-bound.

“You have also caused me sorrow, Johanna, fearful sorrow; it was upon that autumn night when I implored you to make yourself free, and was ready to dare the utmost to win you. At that time, you flung back at me, this hard, ‘Never! Even if Alison should release me and every other barrier should fall, NEVER, Walter!’ Those words have ever since stood threateningly between us both; they have intimidated me up to this mo-

ment. Will you now at last, solve for me the riddle?”

Jane bowed her head. For some moments she was silent, then she said in a hollow voice: “I had found a clue to my brother, I knew that he had been reared by pastor Hartwig, and I heard the name from your lips as that of your foster-father.”

“For God’s sake, you did not believe—?”

“Yes! Do not chide me, Walter, that I deemed it possible. I suffered fearfully from that possibility, I almost died from that unhappy error.”

Jane Forest’s proud lips had at last humbled themselves to this confession, and there was a moist glimmer in her eyes, their “boreal glow” had vanished and the ice with it, and from those eyes beamed forth as it were, a radiant, glowing spring-life. That glance which Alison yesterday had seen but for a moment, when she had fallen on her knees before him in agonized entreaty — that glance through which she had forced him to a renunciation which without it she would never have attained, now fell, ardent yet tender, upon him who had known how to awaken it. He felt the whole spell of this nature, a nature which could irresistibly attract, indissolubly fetter, and infinitely bless. He knew the worth of the being who now, for

the first time, gave herself fully and unreservedly to him.

There was no wooing, no proposal, not even a declaration, between these two; but there was much, inconceivably much that had been wanting at that first betrothal where all had been so formally arranged, glowing blushes, tears of happiness, and a betrothed bride, tender, joyous yielding up of life and future into the hands of him she loved. And here was the deep, glowing, inspired passion of a man over whom cold calculation and interest could have no sway. In his arms, Jane felt that this dreamer who had known how to throw aside the pen and wield the sword, knew also how to love with all the fervor of a deep, unselfish nature.

There was a rustle in the shrubbery at the foot of the ruin, and Mr. Atkins, who again had been playing the spy, came to light. But this time, he neither disturbed the pair of lovers, nor brought them his congratulations.

His face expressed anything but good wishes as hastily and unremarked, he took the homeward way.

"A most preposterous, sentimental thing, love is here in Germany!" he growled. "Jane Forest was lost us to the moment she set foot on this poetic soil. It is shameful! And that accursed Rhine over yonder, with its romance, is answerable for all!"

He threw a glance of deepest resentment upon the hated river, and then, muttering, turned his back upon it. But the Rhine did not seem to take the discourtesy at all to heart. All through its waves there was a sparkle and a glitter as if the old Niebelungen horde had mounted up from those deep recesses, making those waters one tide of liquid gold, that overflowed even the environing shores. And the old river rolled on mightily and triumphantly, as if upon its swelling current, it were bearing the spring and peace far into the land.

THE END.

HEAVY YOKES.

BY

JANET H. HADERMANN, *Vol. 1, No. 1*

AUTHOR OF "AGAINST THE WORLD," "DEAD MEN'S SHOES," "FORGIVEN
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HEAVY YOKES.

CHAPTER I.

A WORLDLING DIES.

"And thus with greater cause
Would we respect the laws,
Which *should* be revered to be obeyed,
It isn't best to see them made."

"Has she come?"

"They have come, sir."

What was there in the substitution of a plural for a singular pronoun, which should so have disturbed the sick man? His eyes shot angry flames as they rested reproachfully upon the gigantic form and child-like countenance of the creature who had served him with the faithfulness of a dog through all the darkest passages of his life.

"They. Who, Danbury?"

"Father Richards, sir, the Judge's lady, the reverend and his lady—"

"You meant well, Danbury, but you have been officious, displeasingly so. Is there no one else below?"

"I was going on to say, Colonel, a strange lady, sir, that nobody seems to know."

"Show her up."

"Sir!"

"Show the strange lady up alone, Sergeant."

The old army title revived military discipline. It was for the Sergeant to obey and not question. He gave a military salute and disappeared to do his superior's bidding, suppressing, with soldierly resolution, even the inclination to marvel at the strangeness of that bidding.

Sergeant Danbury knew no better watchword than obedience.

Unquestioning obedience had been the practice of his life, ever since he had entered service under the sick man, up stairs, as drummer-boy, to the present

moment—when he was going into the presence of the aristocracy of the Staunton connection, to tell them that they were not wanted, but that the handsome unknown was. This long discipline in obedience made it easy for him to open the waiting-room door, and after an apologetic bow to the relatives of the master, to announce, clearly and distinctly, as if calling the roll: "Colonel Staunton will see the strange lady first."

Evincing no more emotion than if she had been bidden to break her fast, the strange lady rose up to follow him into the sick man's presence.

* * * * *

Before Sergeant Danbury's advent, weariness of the monotony of waiting, had been the prevailing facial expression of the family group; after his exit, lively and indignant surprise, more or less openly expressed, took possession of the family bosom. Father Richards, whose classic head, with its crown of snow, not cropped after the priestly style, had been bent in absorbed attention over "*Balme's European Civilization; Protestantism and Catholicity Compared*," raised his thoughtful blue eyes toward the retreating figures for a brief second, then dropped them again to the ponderous tome before him. But had you watched him closely, you would have marvelled at the length of time which it took such a finished scholar to travel over one little page. Father Richards plainly had his own thoughts about the strange proceeding on the part of the dying worldling, but "*William had always been odd*," and Father Richards's thoughts about this present and probably final exhibition of his oddness were as much his own private property as the black gown which hid the manly proportions of his really fine form.

Sergeant Danbury's summons to the

strange lady were not so placidly received by some other members of the company the Rev. Mr. St. John Ames, for instance, who was standing in front of the glass doors of the book-case, glaring at the stately array of good books behind them.

His eyes followed the retreating forms of the old soldier and the strange lady, and as the door closed upon them he turned suddenly from the consideration of ancient authors to inquire of the Rev. Mrs. St. John Ames, a faded little woman with faded eyes and a faded spirit, in that quick, harsh voice, that never failed of effect, when hurled from the pulpit like a stone from a sling, straight upon the nodding heads of drowsy sinners:

"Maria, what does that mean?"

This query was a very familiar sound in the meek woman's ears, being delivered, as it was on the present occasion, with a fierce accentuation which seemed to hold her personally responsible for the eccentricities of other folks. The sick man's anomalous proceedings, collecting all his nearest of kin under his roof (for how should they know that they owed their summons to the affectionate officiousness of Sergeant Danbury alone), and then sending for this handsome stranger to interview her privately, while they, the dignified and titled ones of the earth, must bide their time like a parcel of office-seekers in the ante-room of a political magnate, was altogether unbearable and unaccountable, and if Maria did not know what it meant, (raised up with him, too, her born brother), she must be a poor sort of a woman indeed.

As usual, rather than acknowledge herself a poor sort of woman, by saying boldly and truthfully that she could not imagine what it meant, Mrs. St. John ventured upon a guess—at best a risky alternative, on this occasion an unsuccessful one:

"Maybe this beautiful lady is nearest of kin to poor baby's mother, dear."

A pair of gold-rimmed batteries was brought to bear upon the feeble guesser from the arm-chair which supported the richly robed person of the "Judge's lady," (own born sister to the faded supplement), a lady of such dignity and importance and aggressiveness that it was really hard to believe that the two sprang from the same parent stock. The purple and fine linen in which the Judge's lady

was clothed were not in greater contrast with the reverend sister's rusty black, than was the meek self-abnegation of the one with the proud self-assertion of the other.

"Baby's poor mother, Maria, my dear, was a French woman named Tricou, if you will only try to remember, sometimes. Who she was or where William picked her up, Heaven only knows, and possibly it is well for the family peace of mind that we know no more than we do of her. This stranger, who is no more French than you or I, can hardly be of nearer kin in this house than those whom William has seen fit to insult for her sake. What it may mean," continued the Judge's lady in tones of authority, tapping the arms of her chair with her gold-rimmed glasses, and looking with contemptuous pity upon her meek sister, as if she was reluctantly compelled to endorse the general sentiment which pronounced her but a poor sort of a woman, "it is worse than idle for us to conjecture. William Staunton was always an unaccountable man. He has been doing things in his strange way ever since he could talk, and it seems as if he could not make up his mind even to die in a commonplace manner. Sooner or later, I feel satisfied that some sort of explanation will be vouchsafed us, of this proceeding, which strikes us all, not excepting Richards there, demure as he looks in his priestly gown and pious abstraction, as being very peculiar to say the least of it. In the meantime, my dear kinsfolk, tranquillize your minds. I shall wait with philosophic patience, the denouement, which is sure to come in some more or less satisfactory form," With which peroration Mrs. Judge Weyland settled herself into a more luxurious position, patted her glossy braids as if in self-commendation for such wise utterances, with a plump, white hand, upon which glittered diamonds, one of which would have made a year's income for her less fortunate sister, and indulged in one of those well-bred yawns which, translated, means, "you bore me." For want of something better to do, they all took the Judge's lady's advice and waited for the denouement,

* * * * *

"Leave the child here, and Miss Morgan will call you when you are wanted, nurse."

The voice which uttered these words of dismissal was so strong and rich that it was hard to associate it with physical decay, much less imminent dissolution.

For the first time, since entering the house, signs of emotion disturbed the statuesque calm of Miss Morgan's handsome face. The pale cheeks grew a shade whiter. Her full red lips parted with a sudden tremulous motion, and, as she laid her hand in greeting within the attenuated one William Staunton stretched out with eager joy, a perceptible quiver ran through her stately form, nor was her voice quite free from emotion, as she bent over the prostrate form of the sick man with the simple greeting:

"I am come, William; what can I do for you?"

Whatever these two had been to each other in the long ago, the tie must have been strong, and its severance severe. For no one could look upon the strongly-marked features of the dying man, and doubt that his had been a nature of vigorous growth, and sturdy independence, nor could they trace the lines of quiet endurance about the curves of the lady's beautiful mouth, and think that they belonged to an ordinary woman. These two strong natures had acted somehow upon each other in days by-gone, and the deep look of tenderness which shone in the eyes already growing dim with the shadow of the coming event showed that in one of those souls, if not in both, the memory of those days by-gone was strong and fresh.

"This is kind of you, Eleanor, so kind. I had no right to ask as much."

With a successful effort for self-recovery, the stately lady, bending over him for awhile in soft, womanly sympathy, laid the long white hand she had been holding in her own back upon the bed; then seating herself in the chair which the old Sergeant had politely placed before leaving the room, she drew toward her the little seven-year-old girl who stood gazing at the strange lady with wonder-stretched eyes, and, gently lifting her upon her lap, she passed her slender fingers caressingly through the child's thick hair, thus mutely admonishing the dying man that there and there alone should his last thoughts cluster.

She was understood. "Poor little Delphine. It is for her sake, dear

Eleanor, that I have dared so much as to send for you."

"I expected as much," the commonplace answer, given in a quietly, lady-like voice, seemed to place an impassable barrier between them individually. Her words meant, "Your child is the safe neutral ground upon which we meet."

"You will take charge of her for me?" The voice was as tenderly pleading as a woman's.

"I! She has relatives much better fitted for the task in every way."

Something wonderfully like a sneer, curled William Staunton's lips:—who? that woman of the world Mrs. Weyland, or that poor washed-out saint, Mrs. St. John Ames?"

"Is not Father Richards her uncle?"

"Eleanor! A priest! A convent! What has my baby done to deserve such a fate?"

A smile of infinite tenderness played round the lady's lips as she drew the little one closer to her.

"I was but half in earnest when I mentioned that name. But her aunt's; they can give her advantages which I cannot, I am poor, William."

"My child is rich, Eleanor."

A look of undisguised surprise came into Miss Morgan's face.

"You surprise me very much. I gathered from the conversation below that you had returned from France impoverished and that this house and the grounds attached were all that stood between your little girl and absolute poverty."

"I have purposely given that impression, I do not wish that Delphine herself should know until the day of her marriage that she is an heiress."

"Why is this? And how is it to be accomplished?"

"Why! I will tell you, Eleanor. Can you not imagine that the bitterness of death lies in the thought that my child would be exposed to the lures and wiles of every accursed whiskerando whose pocket needs replenishing? How is it to be accomplished? Very easily. All of her property is in France. A friend of mine over there, staunch and true beyond the many, is the sole trustee of Delphine's moneyed interests. I arranged all that before coming home to die. In this country, to you and to one other only, that other, my faithful Danbury,

will the knowledge of her heiresship be imparted. My object in sending for you before admitting my family, is to give you the papers relative to this business, as also the address of my trustee."

"Surely, William, one of your sisters, both of whom have husbands to assist them in this responsible matter, are fitter objects of trust than I."

"Stop, Eleanor! Rather than see my girl grow up under the influence, or become the imitator of either of her two ineane aunts, I would place her under Richards's priestly protection; and rather than do that I would pray to God to let me take my forlorn little one in my arms out into the great unknown, towards which I am travelling."

"But once in my life, have I ever seen a woman upon whom I would model my daughter. That woman is Eleanor Morgan. I ask her to take my little child, to make her like herself, and then the world may tempt her in vain. Panoply her with your own dignity, purity and virtue, and she will be as safe, motherless and fatherless, as though guarded by armed legions."

"Do you know, William, that good people (that is people who when they pray thank God that they are not as others are) would tell you I am not fit to raise your daughter. When you first began to speak, I was tempted to refuse the grave charge you are imposing upon me. I trembled at the responsibility. But I believe, now, I thank you for giving me this little child-soul to experiment upon. This pure white lily, so lately come fresh from the celestial gardens, I would rear into a stately plant and have it go back to the hands of the great gardener as white and as pure as when he entrusted it to you. I will try to have her believe, with me, that there is no sect in Heaven. I will teach her the litany of moral truth and I will inculcate the creed of universal charity. I will teach her that the Father sent his only Son to die for *all mankind*; I will make a woman of her; I will teach her to scorn a lie as she would a theft, to shun vice as she would the leprosy. I will try to make her strong and brave, the two most necessary virtues of her sex."

"Why!"

"She will need them in the hour of suffering."

"But why need she suffer, Eleanor? Beautiful, young, wealthy—"

"And a woman."

"Eleanor—" It came like a wail from out the past.

"Stop, William; do not give a personal application to my broad assertion. My own days of suffering are so far away in the past, and so entirely forgiven, that it would be the most mawkish sentimentality to bring them forward upon this solemn occasion. There was no reproach lying perdu in my remark." The smile which accompanied her words was so calmly serene that it could only have been reflected from a soul at peace with itself and God, a peace born of the consciousness that:—

"It is not all of life to live—
Nor all of death to die."

A silence painful in its intenseness followed upon her words. Then Eleanor spoke again in lighter tones:

"Where is the friend, William, who is to share with me the precious charge you are leaving?"

"Touch that bell three times, please. He will come."

Almost before the sound had ceased Sergeant Danbury stood within the room.

"Danbury, you will please bring from my walnut desk the brass-nailed box which I told you, in case of my sudden death, was to be placed in bank, until you found the lady to whom the letter in your possession was addressed. This is the lady; so your share of the responsibility is lessened. Bring the box and place it in her hands."

The box soon rested upon Eleanor's lap, and upon one of the shining brass nails, which studded the top, there glistened a tear, large, clear and pellucid, for which the old soldier need not have hung his head in shame. Tenderly the lady wiped the shining tribute away with a soft bit of cambric and tenderly she glanced up at the war-beaten visage of the faithful old Sergeant as he stood by the head of the bed, withdrawn from the range of the master's vision.

"Mr. Danbury and I will be good friends and colaborers in Delphine's service, William."

"God bless you both! Sergeant."

"Here, sir."

"To the front, man, where I can look you in the face."

With head bowed down, the old soldier obeyed.

"What, tears in a soldier's eyes?" The wistful gratitude of the voice mollified the gentle mockery of the words.

"I am not going just yet, Danbury. A week—maybe a month—may tell the tale of my ill-spent days. But I do not want to wait until reason deserts her throne to say what ought to be said. Therefore, listen to me now. When I am gone—head up, man—you will take the little lady, as you call her, with all her moveable effects to this lady's address in Wickam. You will be my girl's friend as you have been mine, to the end of your honest life. I believe in you, Sergeant, with all the power of belief left in my soul. I believe that you will watch over my child's interests as you would your own. This house I wish to be kept in habitable order always. I want the child to feel that there is one spot on earth which she can call home, and which will be inalienable. Return here after having carried the little one to Miss Morgan, and you and your worthy old mother, have here a home for life. All I ask is that you will serve my daughter as you have served me. And the God of the orphan will smile upon you." He held out his emaciated hand to the old soldier. It was bedewed with honest tears when he withdrew it.

"Please show my family up, Danbury."

There was a slight rustling of silk and a sanctified odor of priest and clergyman as the family group settled itself about the bed of death.

Very courteously the master of the house received them, submitting to be kissed by the two sisters from whom he had been separated for many long years, exchanging hand-pressures only with his priestly brother and clerical brother-in-law.

Then, with that suavity of manner for which in health he had been so remarkable, he passed into an animated discussion of the private and separate interests of each one present, with an earnestness that implied that there was no other subject of interest common to them all.

With Richards the infallibility dogma was gracefully handled—with the Rev. St. John Ames ritualism was discussed. The Judge's lady was solicited to tell him all about the cadet around whom her maternal affections centred, and poor Mrs. St. John was sympathized tenderly with upon the loss of her

"angel Willie;" with his waning powers he grappled them all, and kept them so skilfully, and yet so fixedly upon the safe ground of their own personal concerns, that when the dying day warned them to depart, not one in all that brave crowd had ventured to touch upon his personal concerns.

"We will see you again, brother" said Mrs. Ames, bending over him for a farewell kiss.

"Hardly, Maria, as I will not trouble you to come this distance soon again. It is not likely I shall live very many more days."

"Then, William, possibly it would be a comfort to have me remain with you." It was Father Richards who spoke.

"Thanks, Richards. No, it would be no comfort."

"But the child?" ventured the Judge's lady.

"Is provided for. This lady," indicating Miss Morgan, "whom I know to be thoroughly competent, has undertaken to educate Delphine under her own roof."

"And is there nothing you will allow your family to do for you, William?" and the gray clergyman stepped to the front. "May I not express a hope that you will allow me before leaving to read for your benefit a portion of our beautiful service which—"

"Thanks, reverend brother, but as I have lived so let me die. I am not afraid to die. Your Psalmist says: 'He that hath used no deceit in his tongue, nor done evil to his neighbor, and hath not slandered his neighbor—he that swear-eth unto his neighbor, and disappoint-eth him not, though it were to his own hindrance; he that hath not given his money upon usury, nor taken reward against the innocent—whose doeth these things shall never fall;' on the honor of a gentleman I am guiltless of all these misdemeanors; therefore, if your Bible is sufficient guaranty for my salvation, I can dispense with your kindly proffered services, my dear kinsfolk. But why are you all bidding me good-bye. Surely you do not think of returning home to-night? Let me press you to remain."

But the train which was to convey them to their several destinations was available only once in twenty-four hours, and as they were to be allowed to do nothing for this dying sinner, why should they linger?

A few more faint efforts the professors made to be allowed to indoctrinate the scoffer. Their advances were met and parried with polished steel foils.

They took the return train that night.

"It is too terrible," sobbed poor Mrs. St. John; "our own born brother, too."

"He has lived in France until he is saturated with the spirit of irreligion. He was always inclined toward free-thinking."

"I shall cause masses for a dying soul to be read," said Father Richard.

"Poor William, he is terrible, no doubt. But what an exquisite gentleman. He fascinates one even while giving utterance to his most monstrous views. I only hope my Paul will grow up to be half the polished gentleman he is. After all, it's very comfortable not to have to worry over that child. If ever I saw a mother's vixenish disposition shine out of a young child's eyes, it does in Delphine's."

"Oh! Catherine, when I go back to the time when dear William and you and I used to be such happy little children under the same roof-tree, this all sounds so terrible and heartless and cold."

"Yes, but my dear Maria, we're not three happy little children under the same roof-tree now, and when people don't see each other for fifteen or sixteen years it is utterly impossible to pick up the old feeling just where we left off.

"Ladies," spoke Eleanor Morgan bravely from her unobserved position. "it would be cowardly of me longer to keep silence. You spoke of having been estranged from your brother for many years; that accounts in part for your sad undervaluation of his truly noble character. A free-thinker he was and is—but the thoughts which have come to him in their freedom have been noble and generous thoughts, bearing precious fruits of charity which would have brightened the record of many a professor. I think if I were at liberty to tell you all I have known and heard about this brother of yours (who was the bosom friend of a very dear brother of my own), you would revise your recent comments upon him, and would dare to hope that he will be received into the realms of peace, by Him who came to save sinners, of which he is not chief. Pardon what must sound very presumptuous in your ears, but I think no greater proof of

moral cowardice can be given than fear to defend the absent who are so helpless in their ignorance of attack." Bowing slightly, and allowing her calm gray eyes to rest upon them momentarily with a shade of reproach darkening them, she withdrew once more into her dignified reserve.

How utterly unconscious were they that, while these pitying words of defence were being spoken, Azrael had softly descended, and bidden the corruptible to put on incorruption, guiding the immortality of William Staunton into the awful presence where he was to answer for the deeds done by the mortal. The unusual excitement of the day had only precipitated the fast-coming finale.

CHAPTER II.

THE IMPENDING CALAMITY.

"When fierce, conflicting passions urge
The breast where love is wont to glow,
What mind can stem the stormy surge
Which rolls the tide of human woe?"

—Byron.

"Dear Madam—It is with feelings too big for utterance, that I write this to let you know that my beloved Colonel is no more and that I will start for your city this day weak, with the poor little Lady which this sad stroke has left alone in this wicked vale of tears.

Respectfully your humble and obedient servant,
ALEXANDER DANBURY.

It was this note of the old Sergeant's, truer in sentiment than in orthography, which had brought the inmates of Miss Morgan's home in Wickam into family conclave.

It was located in the prettiest and quietest portion of the county town of Wickam, in the lawyer's quarter, as it was called, in contradistinction to the upper and noisier commercial region. The tiny garden which beautified the front premises was the labor of love of hands unskilled but tasteful. The Morgans, being people of limited means, were very insignificant in the eyes of the community, so much so that although the Judge's lady lived in her grand old house just a mile out of Wickam, and the Rev. St. John Ames was pastor of the Episcopal Church right in the town of Wickam, they met for the first time at William Staunton's death-bed. Moreover, as the Morgans were perfectly

independent in the matter of church attendance, and went now to one and then to another, they were looked upon rather as stray sheep belonging to no man's flock, and hence were left to shepherd themselves. Again, they were newcomers in the aristocratic neighborhood of Wickam, and in the social, as well as the political arena, one must needs have been a naturalized citizen and a resident of so many months or years before one can hope for recognition.

The legal atmosphere of the place had caused its adoption by the Morgans, and, so that the one male member of the little family could here satisfactorily complete his studies, and launch into his chosen profession with fair hopes of success, the women folk were content to bide their time, the more content in that they were sufficient unto their own peaceful enjoyment of life.

There was no undue or unnecessary reticence between the two sisters and the brother who formed that little family circle. Therefore, immediately upon her return, Miss Morgan had given an explicit account of her summons to the death-bed of the man who was known to the other two only as the chosen friend of their own elder brother, now dead. She had told them of the strange bequest of the child to her care. Nor had the admission of a small and probably spoilt child into their quiet little circle been looked upon as the highest earthly good by one at least of the two who had no reasons for feeling any more interest in William Staunton's child than in any other stranger's. Still it had heretofore been discussed as something vaguely in the future. Something which might be interfered with. The sluggish affection of the family might finally be aroused to the pitch of demanding possession of the little one. Mr. Maxwell Morgan, whose studious serenity was threatened, hoped it might. Eleanor had promised. The fulfilment of her promise would be the introduction of a disturbing element, fatal to the quietude so precious to the young lawyer. He it was who brought home the old sergeant's letter.

Eleanor read it, and then looking across at Max, who was arranging his reading matter for the evening with such an air of placid comfort, she said in slightly apologetic tones:

"It is coming, Max."

"What is coming?" The question was genuine, for in the absorption of his legal studies, which were being pursued with the most ardent ambition, Max had temporarily lost sight of the threatened invasion, which he had called an impending calamity.

"The impending calamity."

"The father is dead, then?"

"He is." A slight pause, just long enough for a woman's soul to breathe "Requiescat in pace" over the dead lover of her dead youth. Then the old Sergeant's letter was read aloud.

"Poor little girl, so young and so lonely." It was Max who broke the silence. His tender heart had triumphed over his selfish fears. But for others' sake he still withheld a cordial endorsement of Eleanor's promise.

"You have taken a grave responsibility upon yourself, my dear Eleanor."

"I recognize it in its gravest aspect, Max, but I could not refuse any more than you could, had you been pleaded to by a dying father as I was."

"Will not so young a child absorb every moment of your time?"

"Not unless I manage very poorly. She is no infant; on the contrary, a remarkably bright child past seven years."

"The noisiest of ages."

"She would not be a child and noiseless."

"But how will our precious invalid stand this invasion of her peaceful quiet?"

"Oh! Max, don't mention me. I look forward to the coming of this poor little orphan with the feverish eagerness I used to bestow upon every promised toy. I thank dear Eleanor for her promise. This little Delphine will prattle to me when you are away and Eleanor busy. She shall learn her letters upon this poor useless lap. I don't think, Max dear, it will do any of us harm to have the bright young thing here; we are very happy as it is, but we might be merrier, might we not?"

As Max looked into the sweet face of his younger sister (whose sad fate it had been to be dashed from the buoyant happiness of high spirited girlhood into the pitiful imprisonment of a cripple's life), and saw how that countenance, so pathetic, usually, in its expression of patient endurance, was lighted up with pleased anticipation, his last objection vanished into thin air.

Evelyn, this youngest member of the family was also its idol. Max strode across to her arm-chair, and, taking the bloodless little hands in his warm clasp, he bowed his tall head until its crown of curling brown hair rested upon Evelyn's shining braids: a kiss as soft and gentle as a woman's lips could have given, he pressed upon her forehead: "So let it be, darling sister. If this little orphan serves to brighten one moment of this dear life, I too will thank Eleanor for her promise."

A few more days of expectation, and then one evening, just as Eleanor had lighted the sitting-room lamp and was glancing around to see if everything was just as comfortable as it could be, for it was raining and Max was late, she heard a heavy measured tread upon the front gallery followed, by a knock, and stepping quickly to open the door, she found there the old Sergeant, holding in his strong arms the impending calamity. The soft little cheek, flushed with crying, lay confidently upon the shaggy coat which covered his honest heart, and from between the half-parted lips the breath came gently and regularly. She was sleeping the sound sleep of tired childhood.

Sergeant Danbury had no hand at his own disposal, so, with an apology to the lady for not removing his cap, he walked behind her with his precious burden, trying very hard to walk lightly and noiselessly, with such success as a kind-hearted elephant might have achieved under like circumstances.

"Bless its poor little broken heart," he whispered as he laid baby and bundle on the sofa by Miss Morgan's direction; "it went asleep in the carriage after crying its soul away, and I've walked like egg-shells was under my feet, so I might hand her over and be gone before she wakes up to break my heart too with her big mournful eyes and her cry for him that's gone. And now, Ma'am, with the delivery of this letter (he was writing it when the end came) I believe I've done the full bidding of my beloved Colonel. And Oh! dear lady, will you speak a kind word once in a while to the little lady about the old Sergeant! I would think it so kind of you if you'll just not let her forget old 'Dan,' as she calls me, and bless the sweet lips that says it, say I. You'll know always where to find me, ma'am,

at the old place. And maybe sometimes, Miss Morgan, when the violets are blooming, or the strawberries coming, you'd not mind coming out to the old place for a day and, maybe, a night with little lady, and let her run round like of old. You will gladden two hearts if ever you'd do it. That's mine and the old mother's. At any rate we'll keep things trim and bright, hoping always, if not just exactly expecting her to come to us."

"Indeed, my good Sergeant, your little lady shall not forget you. We will talk about you to her. And you will come to see her whenever you choose to come to Wickam. And again, I thank you for your invitation for us to come out to the old place. We will all come. And you will make my dear sister there happy with your violets and strawberries."

It cheered the honest heart to think his simple invitation was to be productive of happiness to these good friends of his—baby idol, and he brightened up as Eleanor had intended he should.

Miss Morgan pressed him to stay until tea was ready, but his horror of having to bid Delphine good-bye, or of hearing again the childish voice raised in mourning for the dead, was too great. Stooping over the sofa, he took up one little tiny hand, and pressing it to his rough beard and upon his forehead, he dropped it suddenly, gulped down a rising sob, and shaking hands hastily with the two ladies, strode toward the front door and out into the rainy night. It clanged to heavily behind him and awoke the sleeping child.

A bound and one shrill scream for "Dan," and in the centre of the room, her eyes stretched wide with terror, stood the poor little orphan, in the strange house, with strange eyes gazing pityingly upon her.

"How beautiful she is," burst involuntarily from Evelyn's lips, who could do nothing but sit still while Eleanor hastened toward the poor little stranger to take her within the loving shelter of her arms.

And very beautiful the child certainly did look.

Her eyes, lovely, big brown eyes, were shining through the fast falling tears which gemmed her long curling lashes. Her cheeks and lips were crimsoned with excitement, and during her sleep,

her hair, which had been braided in two massive plaits, had come loose from its ribbons and hung about the baby face in great heavy masses.

Eleanor held out her arms encouragingly.

"Come, Delphine, come sit in my lap, you are going to be my little girl now."

The infantile form was drawn up to its fullest height, and the tiny foot stamped with rage as with flashing eyes she turned upon Eleanor:

"I'm not. I'm not. I'm not. I'm papa's little girl. Dan said papa was gone away for a little while, and I might go see him. Dan don't tell stories. I want to go to papa. I want Dan; oh! Dan, where is you!" and the wail which followed upon the stormy gust pressed tears of compassion from her two loving hearted auditors.

"Delphine, don't you know poor little darling, that I am the lady who held you in her lap when she went to see your papa? And don't you remember papa telling you that I would be good to you and love you?" She approached the little figure once more. Still retreating and stamping, another storm-gust burst upon them. She "didn't want anybody to love her and be good to her, but papa and Dan. What had they done with Dan? She wanted Dan! Dan! Dan!"

Miss Morgan was almost at her wits' end; as she advanced the little one retreated; her exhortations were unavailing. The child she feared would make herself sick. Just then the door opened and Max, astonished, stood upon the threshold. At a glance he comprehended the situation. Eleanor in pleading attitude and with pitying face—the child defiantly retreating, standing at bay in baby despair. She had retreated almost to the door, stooping quickly before she was hardly aware that the enemy had been reinforced; Max bore her captive toward the fire in his strong arms. Her unimprisoned hands revenged this indignity done to her small person. Into his short brown locks they twined themselves viciously. They rested unlovingly upon his forehead, nose and cheeks in rapid succession, taking a final grip upon his moustache, which made her captor wince with pain.

"What a vixen it is," he said, seating himself with his prize still upon his lap and pushing his disordered hair from off

his eyes, before proceeding to moral suasion.

Then tightening his hold around the little form until kicking and pummelling were rendered physical impossibilities, Max looked straight into the flashing eyes with tender pity shining in his own.

"Delphine!"

Delphine did not answer, but the lids drooped over the flashing eyes, and the tiny mouth quivered pitifully. "Does Delphine want to know how she can get to see papa again, and all about Dan?"

Delphine did want to know all there was to know about those two most dear to her baby heart, and she intimated her desire between convulsive sobs. "And she will be very quiet and sit in Miss Morgan's lap while she tells her all she wants to know?"

"Yes."

Then Max gave her to Eleanor saying, "Take her. The task is beyond me." and he passed out of the room. Coming back half an hour later he found Delphine sitting quietly where he had left her. Eleanor had talked at length, gravely and tenderly. Had the baby mind taken it all in? He doubted it; for suddenly clasping her small hands she exclaimed rapturously:

"I know, I know, Dan is gone for papa and they'll come back to Delphine tomorrow."

"Time can do what you cannot, sister; let patience have its perfect work," said Max, with a smile of pity for baby's delusion and Eleanor's wasted eloquence.

CHAPTER III.

ELEANOR SUSPECTS.

"The first sigh of love is the last of wisdom."—*La Bruyère*.

A moot question! Whether—is it pleasanter to watch the progress of a flower seed which our own hand has hidden away in the germinative soil—swell, sprout, shoot heavenward, take on its first tender foliage, finally bursting into flowery magnificence, or, to hide that seed away in the sheltering bosom of mother earth, giving it no heed until nature has worked the wondrous miracle of its perfection and it bursts upon us in the plenitude of fragrant beauty, intoxicating the senses and making glad the eye?

A relevant question! Whether—shall

I, after the fashion of the long ago, ask my readers to "imagine an interval of seven uneventful years;" or else, beg them to watch with me the slow unfolding of my small heroine from the tender floweret which Sergeant Danbury carried so gently in his strong arms to place safe within Eleanor Morgan's fostering care, there to be reared and cultured into the "stately plant" of her promise.

In the case of the admirable Crichton, Master of Arts, we are told, at the tender age of fourteen it is more than probable that reflection seized the helm before he was well out of long clothes. But with my heroine, Miss Delphine Staunton, a creature of latter-day mediocrity, I am sure that sensation was still in the ascendant when she reached her fourteenth birthday, which found her mistress of no art, save that of winning hearts.

Long before that day had rolled around, Delphine had come to be not only with, but of the Morgans. Eleanor (who found her daily increasing delight in inscribing pure, good principles of living upon the fresh tablets of a girlish soul), wondered how she could ever have dreaded to undertake the charge, so docile was the child; Evelyn, whose share in the formation of a true woman out of this parentless child was not slight, wondered how she had ever dragged through the dull, lonely mornings without her sunbeam, as she loved to call the child. Max, arrived at the dignity of a growing reputation, and a long silky beard, followed with eyes full of satisfaction. The buoyant figure of the pretty creature who was always so glad to offer some tender little attention to "poor dear tired old Max," as soon as he reached home, wondered how he could ever have been such a brute as to call her a "calamity."

To the child herself those seven years meant nothing more than a glad succession of sunshine and kindness, and beauty and fragrance, during which time she grew in conscious stature and conscious beauty, with a heart brimful of ardent, trustful affection for the good God above—for "Precious Eleanor," "Angel Evelyn," "Dearest old Max," and "Her Dan"—the old Sergeant standing very much in the position of a huge Newfoundland pet-dog in his little lady's affections.

Are there not in the picture-gallery of every one's memory photographs of certain scenes or occurrences, trivial and perhaps inconsequent in themselves, which retain through many a changing year? Yes, even until memory deserts her throne, the vivid coloring of their inception, while others, more recent and perhaps more fateful, succumbing to the mellowing touch of time, grow pale and paler, dim and dimmer, until nothing remains to tell the tale of their happening, except, maybe, a heart-scar or a tear-stain.

When the soft brown hair which was the glory of Eleanor Morgan's prime, lay in waves of silver on her calmly handsome brow, she could never sit by an open window in the soft May time, smelling the violets and the hyacinths, and listening to the dull, lazy drone of the beetle, without seeing before her a trim little garden, a green iron-chair under a honey-suckle vine occupied by the slender, graceful figure of Delphine Staunton, a huge straw garden hat shading her pretty face, while her hands (sadly sun-browned from the amount of unskilled labor she persisted in expending upon Max's flower-beds) made believe to be busily occupied making seed bags for the coming time of gathering in the flowery harvest. Max's position in the picture was that of a self-absorbed florist, with no eyes nor thought for the bright, soul-gifted flower under the honey-suckle vine, so deep was his interest in the gaudy tulip over which he was bending, impatiently eager for the moment when it would burst into variegated splendor in reward for his gentle culture and patient waiting.

There was nothing in the picture which Eleanor could possibly fix upon as having any bearing upon what had gone before, or what was to come after. It simply pointed an era. It was the dawn of a great surprise; the night-fall of a happy, care-free time.

"Max," Delphine was saying, as she sat in the garden-chair on that soft May morning, "don't you think I am a very brave woman?"

Still bending with lover-like solicitude over his slow-coming tulip, Max answered without taking the trouble to look into the bright face under the big garden-hat:

"You have appropriated an imposing adjective and a proud substantive. Miss

Staunton, I should like to have you make good your claim."

"Why, don't you think it's just as brave as can be for me to defy public opinion by being on such good terms with a carpenter and a gardener?"

"The two trades most honored by time and precedent. Surely the carpenter's trade ought to be held in venerated esteem by all good Christians, for the gentle mother of the Christ whose name they boast did not disdain to consort with a carpenter, and as for the antique respectability of the gardener, I need only refer you to our great progenitor, Adam."

"Max, what sort of spade and wheel do you suppose were in use when 'Adam dug and Eve span?' Come, now, it's your turn to say your catechism. Say it like a good boy."

"Please ma'm, that isn't in my book."

"Don't know it?" rising inflection of surprise.

"Don't know it!" rising inflection of acknowledgment.

"Is it possible I have found something that my encyclopædia cannot explain?"

"Very many things there are, sadly many, little girl, that your encyclopædia, as you foolishly call me, cannot explain. After all, my knowledge, like your bravery, in fact like almost any attribute we bungling mortals boast of possessing, is but comparative."

"I am consoled for synonyms," said Delphine, folding her small hands over the work in her lap and heaving a sigh of supreme satisfaction. Then she sent her restless eyes on a tour of inspection down the road. They informed her of the approach of a dashing equipage. In a voice of tragic warning she called out to Max, who, having exchanged his spade for a hatchet, was dealing sonorous blows upon a broken fence-panel a little distance off:

"Max!"

"Miss Staunton!"

"Hide your hatchet."

"Wherefore? I am no more ashamed of my hatchet than was the immortal George himself. Beside, there are no cherry trees in jeopardy."

"But your reputation is."

"From what?"

"I see a carriage coming."

"Carriages don't slander."

"But it is full of ladies, Max."

"Oh! That is a different statement

and increases the jeopardy. How do you know there are ladies in it?"

"By token of their silken robes and nodding plumes, sir."

A ripple of girlish laughter and a sounding blow from Max's hammer, as he drove the last nail home, put a period to their serio-comic conversation just as the prancing grays attached to the advancing vehicle came to a stand-still, with a proud toss of their flowing manes by way of protest against the stoppage. Quietly laying down his tools as the driver's "oh! boys," informed him that his own gate was their destination, and ridding himself of his working gloves as he advanced, Mr. Morgan assisted the inmates of the vehicle to alight with as much sang-froid as if they, Wickam's extreme fashionables, had found him creditably engaged in reading Blackstone, instead of discreditably, in mending his garden fence. If the whole truth must be told, he did not even have the grace to look ashamed of his occupation, as, brushing any suspicion of soil clinging to his gray cassimeres, carelessly away, lifting his hat to greet them in his own gravely dignified fashion, his hair was discovered clinging to his broad white forehead, in damp rings, scandalously suggestive of manual labor.

A bevy of four gorgeously arrayed young ladies alighted and fluttered, preceded by Delphine, across Max's gem of a garden, paling the tulips and dahlias into insignificance in their transit. Bird-like notes of admiration floated back to where Max had taken possession of Delphine's vacated seat and was idly toying with the tiny gold thimble she had left there with her discarded work.

"What an exquisite place!"

"Those superb petunias!"

"That heavenly solitani!"

"What a perfect jewel of a gardener Miss Morgau must have."

Delphine hoped Max was within hearing, as she replied gravely: "She has."

"How long has she had the treasure?"

"He was here before I was born."

"What! How in the world does she manage to keep him?"

"She feeds him well. My aunt Weyland says that is the secret of managing almost every man."

"But where did she get him?"

"He was a God-send. Mr. Morgau is our gardener."

"Mr. Morgan!"

Four voices simultaneously uttered the name, for that haudsome Mr. Maxwell Morgan, attorney and counsellor at law, was the object of open admiration and secret adoration to more than one youthful Wickamite of the soft sex, and to find that the hand for which they would willingly have exchanged their own jewelled ones, actually hoed and raked and dug as any hired man or Irish ditcher might have hoed and raked and dug, was a most cruel shock.

In answer to the summons which Delphine hastened to convey, Miss Morgan soon entered the parlor, and then came to light the occasion of this sudden influx from the fashionable quarter of Wickam.

A church fair was in progress! Would not good Miss Morgan assist? and there were also to be tableaux, and they had come to beg her to lend them Miss Delphine. Pretty girls were so scarce (here the pretty speaker looked conscious of one notable exception to the scarcity), that unless every one would help, their tableaux would certainly prove a failure.

Eleanor had a cold negative ready, but glancing at Delphine before giving it, she found her face brimful of happy excitement. It was impossible to say "no" with that bright face pleading for "yea."

So Delphine was loaned, and the ladies made happy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAIR AND THE TABLEUX.

A day or two after the descent upon Miss Morgan, which resulted in the loan of Delphine for the tableaux, there appeared in the Wickam Weekly Watchman a harmless-looking announcement to the effect that the ladies of the Locust Street Church proposed, D. V., holding a fair, for one night only, for the benefit of the Church. For one night only! Let discreet silence be maintained relative to the day before the fair, the day of the fair, and the day after the fair. All the glory, profit and compensation clustered round that one night only. But that one night only was an event which cast its shadow before.

What cared that noble army of martyrs, the public, coming en masse, amiably bent upon being fleeced, of the herculean task it had been to convert a weather-stained tobacco warehouse into a fairy palace for one night only? What did they know of the anguish which filled Mrs. Tomlinson's soul, because Mrs. Robinson's table was just under the big chandelier, when she had said, from the very first, hers was going to be? or of the dismay of the unhappy woman, whose sole source of revenue was strawberries and ice-cream, at the vicious refusal of the cream to freeze? or of the physical agony Miss Walker was enduring from tight shoes, the while she bent smilingly over her table to persuade a white-bearded deacon in the Church that the one thing lacking to his perfect happiness here below was possession of some of the handsome articles which she would sell him so low?

On to the charge was the battle cry of the fair money-changers, fighting upon the principle that the end justifies the means.

The soundness of which principle Mr. Maxwell Morgan, entering the rooms at the advanced hour of eleven, took the liberty of doubting.

It had not been without a demurrer on his part that Delphine had been allowed to take an active part in the tableaux which were to form the crowning glory of the entertainment. His sister's promise he could have nullified; but when Delphine herself, with hands folded in petition, and eyes sparkling with eagerness, had stood before him with her: "Please, dear Max, say yea." Max had said "yes" in spite of himself, and had escorted his sister and her to the rooms early in the evening, promising to return at a later hour.

So he did. But as he threaded his way through the crowd, his handsome head towering above the majority, making him a conspicuous target for old ladies who had just one more chance left for that superb quilt; young ladies who insisted upon selling him something he did not require; and middle-aged ladies who begged to be allowed to make a tailor's dummy of him for the display of a dressing-gown, he repented him that he had allowed their fresh little Delphine to be thrown into this whirl.

At the magic hour of midnight the clatter subsided as the crowd settled it-

self in preparation for the tableaux. Mr. and Miss Morgan chanced to occupy seats behind a group of young men whose chatter was almost unendurable.

A murmur of admiration ran through the crowd as the rising curtain displayed to their gaze Conrad the Corsair, tenderly bearing the dark-eyed Gulnare to a place of safety.

Borne aloft upon the stalwart arms of her bandit guardian, her lovely black hair floating unconfined down her back, the jewelled rosettes upon her tiny slippers touching the sword-hilt upon the Corsair's thigh; her splendid eyes, Oriental in their lustrous darkness, glowing with the light of intense excitement, Delphine Staunton gazed down upon the crowd, forgetting her rôle of picturesque calm, as she searched eagerly through the crowd for the only two whose admiration she cared to win.

The girl that night, as she stood patiently, while able hands transformed her into a happy likeness of the fair Gulnare, had received a revelation! She knew she was beautiful! And the soul within that budding form would not have been a woman's soul had it not bounded with gladness at the thought.

Would Eleanor and Max think her beautiful that night? Ah! She hoped so; and a sigh of ecstasy escaped from her rich full lips as she turned from the mirror where she had lingered, in rapt surprise at her own loveliness, naïvely unconscious that she was winning an unmerited reputation for vanity.

It took her but a second to descry Max, but the delighted recognition of her queenship's supreme beauty, which she had hoped to read in his eyes, was not there. Instead, a sternness almost amounting to savageness sat upon his brow. Never before had she seen that look upon Max's face.

The curtain fell, and Gulnare springing nimbly from the embrace of the Corsair, sped back to the greenroom with tears of disappointment welling into her eyes.

What cared she that the loud clapping of hands on the other side of the curtain and the vociferous encores proclaimed the success of her appearance?

Eleanor had looked serious and Max

looked angry, and the poor little queen of the harem tore her jewelled diadem from her brow with girlish petulance, just as Conrad came smilingly forward:

"They are calling us back, Miss Staunton."

"I am not going back, Mr. Hardaway," said the uncrowned queen, with such decision of voice and manner that tableau number two was put into immediate preparation.

On the other side of the curtain the shadow was darkening on Max's brow.

"By jupiter!" cried one of the youths before mentioned, "isn't she a trump, though?"

"Little beauty and no mistake."

"Maybe if I was that lucky dog Hardaway, I'd let go tonight."

With a blow of thunder and a voice quivering with suppressed passion, Mr. Morgan leaned forward, and, touching the last speaker smartly on the shoulder with his glove, he said: "Sir, the young lady you are discussing so freely is a member of my family. You will please select another topic of conversation, and that immediately." Waiting just long enough to see that his suggestion was acted upon, Max, with a face full of disgust silently offered his arm to his sister, and together they went in search of Queen Gulnare, just giving her time to find her out-door wraps.

Pondering upon her brother's undue excitement, coupling it with the flash of passionate admiration she had surprised in his expressive eyes, the moment when Delphine had burst so gloriously upon their view, followed by his extreme irritation at the wordy admiration of others, Miss Morgan, well versed in reading men's souls, felt a great load of anxiety settling down upon hers. It was trouble coming from a source so little suspected that it took her unawares.

So the three walked homeward, Max moody, Eleanor depressed, and Delphine tasting bitterly that drop of gall which mingles ever with earth's sweetest draughts.

On the day after the fair, upon casting up accounts, the lady managers returned the unanimous decision—a grand success—but there were sundry and various private decisions per contra.

CHAPTER V.

TOMORROW.

"Tomorrow! The mysterious unknown guest,
Who cries to me: 'remember, Barmecide,
And tremble to be happy with the rest,'
And I make answer: I am satisfied,"

—*Longfellow.*

The next morning found Delphine, in common with many another youthful Wickamite, suffering from a complaint which, though traceable, definable and symptomatic, being one of the most decided ills that human flesh is heir to, has never been treated of scientifically by pathologists. Traceable to undue and excessive excitement; definable as an affection of the nervous system; symptomatic as indicated by white cheeks, heavy eyes, and general conviction of the hollowness of life and its allurements.

It is but proper to observe here, that this complaint never attacks the very young or the very old. Those in the prime of life are most subject to it. It frequently becomes epidemic after balls and "lodge meetings." It may be called reaction.

"Nonee!" said the suffering ex-Queen Gulnare (addressing Miss Morgan by the pet corruption of her Christian name, with which she always introduced a petition), "suppose we go to see Dan. I know the old place is looking its prettiest now, and I am so tired of people and things."

Glancing toward the speaker over his morning paper Max, was startled by the whiteness of her cheeks and the dulness of her eyes.

"The child is looking badly, Eleanor," he said quickly; "I think her suggestion a good one. Take her down to the place and let her run around in the woods until she wins back the bloom she has sacrificed in the good cause."

"Don't put it on such a magnificent footing, Max; I begged Nonee to let me act in the tableaux because I thought it was going to be fun."

"Well, and was it not 'fun?'"

"No—it was stupid."

"What made it stupid?"

"You."

"I!"

"Yes, you, Max. Everybody told me, before the curtain rose, that I was beautiful, and I thanked them for it, for oh! Max, it does make me feel so happy to have people praise me, and when I stood before the long glass in the dressing-room

dressed as Queen Gulnare, I saw that I was beautiful and it made me glad, and I was quivering for the curtain to rise because I thought you and Nonee were going to be glad too, to see me look so pretty, and when the curtain rolled up I looked about for you two, and there you sat; Nonee looking as serious as if I had been doing something awful and you looking as glum—asglum—why just twice as glum, Max, as when Lady Gay jumped over the garden fence and ate up your finest gladioluses."

Max's sober face relaxed into a smile of pity for such genuine distress.

"But every one else applauded. All the world but my 'glum self' seemed to think you pretty."

"What's all the world to me—or I to all the world? That was not what I wanted. I wanted to make you and dear Nonee happy."

"And do you think you can do that simply by being beautiful, my dear?" interposed Eleanor, very gravely.

"Not by being beautiful alone, Nonee; but does it not give you pleasure to look at pretty things? And when we are pleased are we not on the way to being made happy?"

"Undoubtedly. But, Delphine, nothing mars the pleasure of contemplating a beautiful face more than the self-consciousness of its owner."

"Self-consciousness!"

"An amiable substitute for vanity, child," said Max, somewhat tartly, for he began to fear that the hurt to the freshness of this cherished soul-flower of theirs was greater than had at first appeared.

"Vanity!" said Delphine, casting back the charge of vanity in reproachful tones, while she looked her accusers proudly but sadly in the face, "I am not vain, and it is cruel in both of you to call me so. God gave me my beauty, and I thank Him for the gift, for oh! I do hate ugliness in man, or in beast, or in nature. But I no more take credit to myself for pleasing others with my looks than your roses do, Max, for making you happy by being beautiful, or your violets for giving pleasure by their sweetness. I think vanity is the silliest of all weaknesses and I despise it. But if, by self-consciousness, Nonee, you mean, to reproach me for knowing that I am pretty, I am sorry, but I cannot promise to unknow it."

"The child is right," said Max, "and we, her accusers, do acquit her of the charge of that 'silliest of all weaknesses,' vanity. Now, Miss Staunton, when shall we pay Sergeant Danbury a visit?"

"Tomorrow. Oh! Max, tomorrow, please."

"Tomorrow, then. Now go make up for your loss of sleep," and, passing his hand gently across the young brow, as if to smooth away the shadow he had helped Eleanor fling there, he let it rest for a moment in silent benediction, then stooped to print a peace-making kiss on the upturned face, before leaving the house for his office.

Delphine was right. The old place was indeed looking its very prettiest as she and Miss Morgan, having dismissed their hired conveyance at the boundary gate, walked leisurely up to the house by way of the live-oak avenue, among whose branches a multitude of happy birds were rejoicing in the golden flood of light cast into their leafy fastnesses by the setting sun.

"Let us surprise them, Nonee." Delphine had suggested, and nothing loth to get the full benefit of the pure country air; Miss Morgan had dismissed the carriage and consented to this walk.

The premises had been very much improved within a few years, through the devoted energy of Sergeant Danbury.

On this particular occasion he and "the old mother" were sitting out-doors upon a side terrace, in placid enjoyment, he of his pipe, she of that soberly engaging volume, Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, both of the Lord's blessed sunshine, when suddenly that sunshine was shut out from the old soldier's vision by a bandage of white fingers.

"The little lady! God bless the bits of hands, there's not another pair like them this side of where His angels stand."

"You stupid Dan, when will you stop flattering me in that ridiculous fashion?"

"Flattery, I take it, little lady, is false praise," and stupid Dan bustled about in an ecstasy of welcome to bring seats for his two visitors.

"Now, Dan," said my Lady Paramount, locating her low wicker rocking-chair (which was religiously regarded as sacred to her use) where she could get the best view of the calm woodland scenery surrounding her home, "begin and tell me just what you and the mother, and the flowers, and the chickens, and all the

rest of my pets have been doing since I was here."

Thus summoned to give an account of himself, before the highest earthly tribunal his simple soul acknowledged, the old Sergeant answered promptly:

"By way of work, planting out horse-chestnuts in your cross walk, that's to lead to the pond under the willows. By way of rest, smoking the handsome pipe you brought me last time, while I carved them cedar brackets you was saying you'd like to have for your flower-vases. By way of pleasure, looking forward to this blessed coming of good Miss Morgan and you. That's about all, little lady, and a poor showing it makes when you come to sum it up in words. I think the flowers and the chickens can show a better record after all, for they've been growing and getting handsomer against your coming."

"Don't you go to doing either, Dan, for if you should grow any more I would have to go up stairs to look you in the eyes, and if you should get handsomer you wouldn't be the dear old Dan I've been abusing ever since I could talk. And the mother?" Miss Staunton's rocking-chair performed a feat to which well-bred rocking-chairs are not much given: it revolved upon one rocker for the purpose of bringing its occupant's bright eyes to bear upon this diminutive mother of a gigantic son.

To Delphine's inquiry she answered, serving the Lord, child, according to my dim lights. Lending a helping hand to snatch brands from the burning, and only asking that it may please One above to let me stay in this vale of tears long enough to see them that is straying into the broad road of destruction, before my very eyes, turn to Jesus."

"That's me, the mother means," said the Sergeant, cheerfully and generously consenting to be looked upon as a brand in the burning, or a straying sheep, or anything else iniquitous, so that his mother's sweeping attack upon sinners should take on a personal and not a general tone, thereby giving offence.

"No, Dan," said Delphine with a merry laugh, "I am sure the mother means me, for she is always telling me how wicked I am."

"It is my duty, child. Does not the Lord's book tell you to receive instruction and despise it not?"

"Well, mother Danbury, I am not going to despise it, but at present I would rather receive some more news, after which a little more instruction, so that between Dan's news and your instruction I will be nice sandwiched. Proceed, Sergeant. Who is dead, and who is married, and who is gone, and who has come?"

"The old brindle steer is dead, little lady, and Squire Vincent's daughter is married. Good old parson Dawson's gone, and a new minister, that they do say is just a second St. Paul, or whichever was the best of that old time lot, is come in his place."

"Poor old Brindle! Tell me something more about your new minister. I like new people."

"Well, you see, little lady, he's more in the mother's line of trade than in mine; better ask her. All I know is his name is the Reverend Harris Samuels."

"A most God-like youth, and one who will surely find favor in the eyes of the Lord."

"Does he preach good sermons mother?"

"None better since the disciples learned from the Lamb how to talk with sinning man."

"And reads the service well?"

"As if taught by them above."

"Now then, Nonee, we will go to see this second St. Paul for ourselves tomorrow, won't we?"

The little church in which the Rev. Harris Samuels held forth was as modest and unpretending a building as was ever erected to the glory of God. It was a plain weather-boarded oblong room, entered by way of a small portico, over the sides and roof of which a glorious cloth of gold rose, climbed and entwined itself gracefully, casting beauty and sweetness about the rough boards, as if lovingly intent upon hiding their ugliness from unkind looks. The church stood in a clump of magnificent forest trees, scarce over a mile from the dwelling-house on the Staunton place, and as the way all along was pleasantly wooded, Eleanor and her ward preferred walking to riding.

They were a little late in arriving. Delphine had tarried too long in her morning visits to her various quadruped and feathered pensioners, and as they stepped within the shadow of the rose-tree the Benedictus was being sung by a

sparse but sweet-voiced choir, aided by a small melodeon, evidently handled by a master hand.

Miss Morgan and Delphine paused outside, preferring to enter at its close. With somewhat of girlish curiosity the latter glanced towards the reading-desk, where stood the youthful pastor of this simple flock. His eyes (a deep violet eye, made deeper by very long and dark lashes) rested calmly upon the singers with no tragic straining after holy abstraction, but with the rational look of a good man listening with sober pleasure to God's praises, though, maybe, not sung by first-class artists. He was far from vigorous in appearance; slender almost to attenuation, he was still strikingly graceful; his face was, without being strictly handsome, winning in the extreme, from the gentleness of his expression, the beauty of his mouth (clothed simply with a dark mustache), and the luminous charm of his eyes. But never were physical attractions bestowed upon one who valued them less. For, with a pure heart, a clear head and an exalted soul, Harris Samuels had entered the vineyard of the Lord to do with his might what his hands found there to do, and a most efficient laborer was he proving himself to be.

Remembering the text was not our Delphine's forte, and yet the time never came when she could not have told you that the Rev. Mr. Samuels took his text on that bright May Sabbath from St. John, the third chapter and sixteenth verse:

"So God loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life."

"So God *loved* the world." The words were repeated softly and tenderly by the young pastor, as if he too loved the world after the manner of Him he preached. And then there fell upon the ears of the few gathered there together (and into their souls, too, let us hope) the Gospel of Love.

Deep into the tenderly receptive nature of Delphine Staunton sunk the holy influences of that day. Through the opened windows her glance (not so faithful to the speaker as her ears to his discourse) took in (somewhat as an illustration to the text) glimpses of the far away blue skies where dwelt that God who so loved the world that He filled it full of

beauty. Nearer still the solemn shadows of the grand old oaks inclined the heart to graver meditation upon the wisdom mingling with that love in all His provisions for the welfare of ungrateful men.

The discourse was wisely brought to a conclusion before weariness came in to displace the rapt attention of the congregation.

"Nonee," said Delphine, as they two, with Dan and the mother, walked homeward through the pleasant woodland, "I have had four tomorrows this week, but none of them have been so perfect as this."

"Tell me of your four tomorrows," answered Eleanor, long since too familiar with the girl's original and oftentimes happy way of putting things to comment upon it.

"On Wednesday, my tomorrow was to bring me the gayest, happiest time a girl ever had; for I was to be Queen Gulnare, and to have a life-time of fun in that one fair night. But somehow or other, it was not a happy time at all. There was so much fretting and worrying and little sly ill-nature among the women that I felt like exclaiming aloud: "From all blindness of heart; from pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, good Lord deliver us!"

On Thursday, my tomorrow was to bring me a shower of compliments and pretty things from you and Max, and I was to be treated with distinguished consideration as a successful debutante, have a holiday from books and feel grand generally. Instead of which it was the saddest tomorrow of them all, for I got snubbed by you and Max, and was told to go to sleep, rather than made much of.

On Friday, my tomorrow was my trip out here, which was pleasant enough in anticipation and in reality. I have not a word to say against that one except that there was not much novelty about it. It was simply nice.

But this day has been Saturday's tomorrow, and oh! what a happy day it has been. Nonee, do you know I could—I think I could be very good, with Mr. Samuels to help me.

Yes, this has been the best tomorrow of them all.

All through that day life seemed to be a very earnest affair.

The winds, whispering through her

ancestral oaks, breathed solemn messages to her awakened soul. The birds singing in their branches were but echoing to her vivid fancy, the sweet hymn with which that day's services had closed in the little wooden church.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," seemed a commandment of such solemn import, such easy observance.

CHAPTER VI.

A SOUL IN JEOPARDY.

"To find a noble soul is gain; it is nobler to keep it; and the noblest and most difficult is to save that which is already lost."—HERDER.

The household of the Rev. St. John Ames was subject, once in a while, to stagnation, physical, moral and mental, when life and the interest of life were thoroughly becalmed.

What other possible resultant: given—June's radiant heat, Sabbath day restrictions, and the necessity for "setting a good example," with no greater facilities for conquering the old man Adam than other folks are blessed with.

With what divine element or admixture of holiness do we accredit the feeble mortality that enters into the composition of a minister's family, that their most innocent peccadilloes, their slightest trespass should elicit such agonies of surprise?

Alas! then, for the reputation of those should-be-perfects, the Ames, on that radiant Sunday in June, which found them stagnant. For, after all, that consecrated household was composed of flesh and blood, and affections and passions, in no important wise differing from yours and mine, iniquitous reader.

In the family sitting-room, Miss Susie Ames and her brother Augustus were avenging themselves on fate by open denunciation of its hard decrees.

Susie had expressed, not for the first time by many, her sense of the hardship of a minister's family's life.

"I say Susan, why not follow my example?"

"To do that often, would involve a saint in trouble."

"Sharp! by George! I am afraid church-going has a tendency to acidify our temper. I shall forewarn the Rev. of the danger of compulsory attendance on your part."

"By George! Augustus, do you suppose that in all Wickam there is another young man, who passes for a gentleman, that speaks as coarsely as you do?"

"Can't say. Will inquire for your benefit."

"And you a minister's son too!"

"Well, my minister's daughter, there is this difference between us. I never advertised as a saint. Don't bank much on my company manners. But when it comes to private home spitefulness I bow me in admiration of your superior talents. You can beat me too easily to talk about it."

Miss Ames's face flushed crimson, and she slapped spitefully at a fly which had all the family traits of pertinacity and aggravatingness of the individual on the study window. Else, surely, it would have long since given up the effort to extract sweetness from that brown mole on the young lady's under lip, which any fly of the slightest observation would have known by this time to be flavorless.

"Do you know your part of that new voluntary, Gus?" she asked, presently, in a soothing voice. For Augustus was such an uncouth savage that unless he was mollified before they left the house for church, the whole world could see he had been in a temper, and church time was now rapidly approaching.

"No!" savagely.

"Come. I will practice it with you."

"Thanks, no;" and Mr. Ames stretched his handsome person luxuriously out upon the settee, in preparation for another nap, triumphing in the fact that he was leaving Susie in that comfortable position, known as being on "pins and needles."

"Augustus," (despairingly) "don't go to sleep now, it is almost church time."

"Church be hanged!"

"And father will be so angry with you."

"Father be—"

"Augustus!"

"Su—San!"

"I'd rather be a dog—" began Susie hysterically.

"And bay the moon," her brother interpolated drowsily.

"Than be a minister's daughter, from whom perfection is looked for, with such a brother to keep one's temper at boiling point."

"The greater the cross—the greater the crown, my dear."

"Then my crown ought to be very great because—"

"You are so very cross. Yes, dear, quite right. Good night. Now I lay me down to—sleep."

So when the Rev. St. John emerged from his study, satisfied that he was prepared to enlighten his people about the victorious Chedorlaomer in the valley of Siddim, he found his wife and daughter vainly trying to arouse Augustus to a sense of his condition and his duty. The while Susie petulantly explained how closely she had remained with him all evening to prevent this very catastrophe, and how hard she had tried to get him to practice the voluntary with her, and how she had talked to him about his duty as a minister's son—until her partial hearers were fully convinced that Susan had been her own angelic self through the whole ordeal.

For a moment the Rev. St. John stood over the prostrate form of his first-born, gazing as the old Roman might have gazed when about to utter sentence of death upon the sons of his loins:

"Let the boy alone—" was all he said—and turned away to get him to his pulpit.

So they let the boy alone—but in the mother's tender soul, that evening, the weight of his error lay like molten lead—and try as she would to give all her thoughts to God and Mr. Ames—yearningly they wandered back to the little sitting-room—where upon the settee lay stretched the handsome boy who should have been the pride and glory of her waning years—who promised to be their shame and grief.

"Augustus Ames you are a pitiful sneak!"

The accusation rang out upon the darkened stillness of the little sitting-room in the parsonage in such scorn-laden accents, that to see the accused shrivel into nothingness where he lay, would have been no matter of marvel.

And maybe so he would have shrivelled, had his accuser stood before him in the gloaming, clothed in the flesh of a fellow-man, adding the curl of a lip, or the flash of an eye, to the stinging lash of the words.

But it was only conscience, who was not dead but sleeping, in Augustus Ames's bosom, and was sometimes so sore pressed

by his short comings as to lift up its voice in his hours of loneliness and dejection to utter its reproaches aloud.

What with the darkness and the stillness and the dejection born of reaction, it was a golden opportunity for conscience to make one more effort for his redemption.

But where is the man that will sit quietly and listen to the voice of conscience like a chidden child? Conscience had called him a "pitiful sneak," and he had sullenly pleaded guilty to the charge, for it was so particularly true of him on that particular occasion. He had sneaked out of that evening's attendance at church and there was no other word for it. He had not been asleep when Susie began her assault; had heard every word said. It had been hard to lie quiet when his mother's gentle voice pleaded to him.

With him, haunting him, dogging him went the image of his mother's sad face. How many of the furrows on that gentle forehead had her son ploughed? The desire to make the amende seized upon him. He would go to church, late as it was, just for the pleasure it would give that dear mother. He would bring her home leaning on his arm. They would walk slowly, very slowly to get out of ear-shot of his father and Susie (God help him, he sometimes feared he was learning to hate his sister), and then he would tell his mother how much ashamed of himself he was, and how much in earnest he was about reformation.

In pursuance of these good intentions he walked very rapidly toward the church, as does a man who feels himself none too sure of himself, consciously full of those doubts which are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt.

He arrived at the church door brimful of good intentions and courage. The bright lights streaming out upon him seemed to welcome him and beckon him on encouragingly. He paused for a second, for it was not so easy to enter amid all those curious eyes, running the gauntlet of wandering glances, to reach the minister's pew just under the pulpit.

The services were concluded and the sonorous voice of his Rev. Father was ringing harshly out over the listening congregation, in wrathful commentaries upon the sin of rebellion in general, a

vein suggested by the sin of that particular rebel, Bera, who fought against Chedorlaomer in the valley of Siddim, some time ago.

Augustus's feet refused to carry him farther. He wished he had not come so far. His eyes were fastened on his father's stern face; and every word that fell from those merciless lips seemed hurled straight at him as he stood out there in the outer darkness which was but symbolical of that worse darkness, into which he supposed he would eventually be cast, as the reward for the deeds done in the flesh.

He was a rebel! Had rebelled that very night against parental authority. Maybe some of the fierce earnestness which seemed to inspire his father's denunciation of rebels, was but the legitimate result of his own disobedience.

Stern as his father's face always looked, seen by the glare of his pulpit lamps, through the distorting medium of his own excited fancy, it looked unusually so to Augustus; then how could he muster the courage to face those accusing eyes, as he would have to do, on his way to his mother's side? Better not risk it. He was sorry he could not carry out that little plan about comforting his mother; but, "by George," it took more "pluck" than he was master of, to face "father when his blood was up." He would go back to the house and wait for them to come home; then when the dear mother came to his bed-room, as she always did the last thing at night, he would pour out all his bottled-up remorse.

There was plenty of time, though, when father got on one of his Old Testament texts. It took him about a quarter of an hour to introduce the people he was going to preach about to the congregation, another quarter to give them a lesson in ancient geography, still another to tell them what he thought about all those old-time folks, and the last quarter to tell them what they ought to think. Besides his "in conclusions" and his "one-more-words" consumed a good section of another hour, so he was quite safe to drop in at Judge Weyland's on his way home, and spend a few moments with his aunt Catherine, who, somehow or other, was always gay and chatty, and handsome and happy.

He was later getting home than he expected to be. A light was burning in his own bed-room windows. He walked

softly round by the gravel walk until he reached the wing in which it was located. The curtains were undrawn. Sitting by the little table was his mother; the lamp shone on her face—sad and tear-stained; she started and gave a nervous little shriek, as Augustus, placing one hand on the low sill, sprang lightly into the room.

"Mother! I've been making your heart ache again. I am a wretch. But I love you, darling mother, and maybe if you'll still try to believe in me a little, I'll pull through all right yet."

And the mother did the only thing there was for her to do. She kissed him, and asked God to bless her boy.

CHAPTER VII.

"A well brought up dog,
Beast or body, education should aye be minded."

—Scott.

"You are wanted at home—come at once—leave the child where she is.

Max."

It was this telegram, laconic in expression, mystifying in tendency, which sent Miss Morgan back to Wickam on the Monday following her arrival, when she had fully intended to stay the two promised weeks with Delphine, at the old place.

The call must be very urgent to induce cool, deliberate Max to telegraph, and although the injunction, to "leave the child where she was," appeared unaccountable and vexatious, she had learned from experience that Max seldom preferred idle requests, so it was probable he had better reasons than she could guess at for wanting Delphine to remain where she was.

The ominous yellow envelope (which used as they so often are to speed the dart which is to pierce some tender loving heart, with the cruel intelligence of calamity, death, or ruin—is seldom torn open with untremulous fingers) was handed to Miss Morgan just as she had risen from the tea-table.

"Going home!" a girlish wail of disappointment greeted her announced intention. "Why we've just begun to enjoy ourselves, haven't we, Dan?"

"You shall not be disappointed of your visit. Max especially tells me to leave you here to finish it. And when you get tired of people and things,

down here, the Sergeant will bring you back to us.

"Thanks, dear, good Nonee. It is so delicious out here now, with the bright colors in the Heavens above, and the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth, all seeing which can fling the gayest banner to the breeze. What is there in red and green Wickam that could lure one back from this green velvet grass, dotted all over with Dan's bright zenias and portulaccas; or that gorgeous blue sky all smeared with gold, and purple, and red, and lilac in great dashes, as if the angel who had charge of the Heavenly scenery had grown lazy, and dragged his paint-brush listlessly across the blue; or our ambitious little Lake, that thinks to reflect all the glory above until the geese go splashing into it and break its cloud pictures up into wee bits."

Eleanor smiled her usual indulgent smile at this girlish rhapsody. Dan declared that the little lady was talking the old place into beauty, while mother Danbury interrupted her eloquence to charge her with impiety and irreverence by talking of the skies as if they were but a bit of painted scenery and the angels no better than whitewashers.

Delphine just turned her big brown eyes upon the "unco guid" woman, in that inquiring fashion she had about her, whenever novel specimens of the genus homo fell under her observation, and then returned to the matter in hand.

"There's nothing in red and green Wickam to lure one back unless, maybe, it might be Evelyn and Max," Eleanor was saying in a musing manner as if taxing memory to recall one good thing within the despised brick and mortar limits.

"Oh! Nonee, I am a wretch."

"Yes, dear, but now let us talk about what you are going to do when I've left you to your own wayward devices."

"Oh! I am going to be just as good as gold, and mind every word mother Danbury and Dan say to me."

Miss Morgan's face was brimful of incredulity; "provided always they take good care not to say a word which does not tally with your own wishes."

Even the old Sergeant's rugged face had an unbelieving look about it. But although she somewhat doubted that promise of obedience, Miss Morgan knew the child (as the fast-budding woman was still called in her adopted home) to be

trustworthy in every way. For she had so far fulfilled her promise to the girl's dying father, as to have made of Delphine a true, brave-hearted girl, afraid of nothing, but a meanness or a lie.

So she travelled back towards Wickam, with her heart much fuller of anxiety concerning Max's mysterious telegram, than about Delphine.

That young lady inaugurated the novel rôle of obedience to her slave, Sergeant Danbury, by promptly laughing to scorn his first feeble effort to enforce it.

"But then you know, Dan," she retorted, when reminded of her promise to Miss Morgan, "that meant I was going to mind every sensible word you said. And I am sure that Nonee herself would never object to my taking a walk by myself, through those solemn old woods. Why it is just like going to vespers!"

"Trust a feminine for leaving a door open behind her back, to slip through, when promises get burdensome. But, little lady, I never spoke better sense in my life than when I objected to your prowlin' through them woods by yourself."

"Wolves prowl, Dan; young ladies saunter."

"Saunter, then, if the word will better it any. If the holes wern't all dug and them young trees laying by 'em begging to be planted, I'd drop all holds and go with you myself. I'll be there to bring you back safe, anyways."

"Dan, do you take me for a baby?"

"I 'most wish I could, Missy."

"Or a coward?"

"A coward! Two lions rolled into one couldn't make you afraid."

"Yes, they could, Dan; don't fib. Are the woods haunted?"

"By nothin' more terrifyin' than rabbits and squirrels, as I've ever heard."

"Then, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothin' lady, its just the lonesomeness of the thing I don't like. You so little and tender and the trees so big and—"

"Tough. Well I don't propose to run against them nor try to eat them; so their toughness will not afflict my tenderness."

"Anyways, take Blucher along. He'll be some company." So he laid down his spade, and without waiting for her permission, unchained the huge mastiff, whose affections were divided between himself and Delphine, and commanded

him to follow the little lady, and take care of her.

In point of muscular strength and intellect dog Blucher was fully competent for the post assigned him. When the chains which bound him fell clanking upon the floor of his kennel, at this unusual hour, he knew he was to be put upon special duty. He stood patiently to have his collar readjusted with his great intelligent eyes fixed calmly upon the Sergeant's face, while receiving his orders. Sergeant Danbury pointed to Delphine's graceful form walking springingly away towards the woods.

Blucher looked at the girl, then back to the Sergeant, saying with his eyes:—well, what of her?

"Follow her—have a charge."

Blucher said in his own fashion, "I understand," and started after his charge with a slow steady trot, which promised fairly for overtaking Miss Staunton. Jumping, leaping and capering were feats of agility which the dignified Blucher left to harlequins and greyhounds. It behooved the dog who had just been honored with the grave charge of guarding the "Little Lady," to be serious, watchful and circumspect. He fairly bristled with the importance of his position. His long swinging trot brought him up with Delphine just as she passed into the shadow of the great trees. It was cool, and dark, and still under these; oh! so still, that it was difficult to think this shadowing forest was but one small section of the busy world where the sun shone garishly, and men struggled fiercely. The sun was still shining and would be for another long hour, but in the woods the shadows lay long, black and narrow across the path, like coffins awaiting their dead. She was the only thing there that moved, or lived, or had any being. All the world besides was dead!

A cold touch upon her hand, and a deep-toned bark dispelled the illusion.

Then she laughed aloud at her own nervous folly.

"After all, Blucher, I am glad you came. But then, I must acknowledge to Dan that I am both a baby and a coward."

Blucher wagged his assent and trotted to the front, quietly assuming the position of vanguard.

This walk of Delphine's through the sombre woods was not one of those aim-

less rambles so affected by sentimental young ladies, who utilize every bit of woodland for their own romantic idling. fancying, maybe that the great woodman planted the majestic forests for no better purpose. Our young lady's walk had a purpose and a goal.

Sergeant Danbury had told her a pretty little story of how, it was said, the young minister might be seen every evening, just after the sun had dipped his hot and shining face into the cool gray shadows of the coming twilight, going over to the little church, with his blind mother leaning on his arm, and his sister, pretty Miss Samuels walking beside him with the chant books in her hand; and when they got to the little church, the blind mother would be seated at the organ, where she would play chants and hymns and all the rest, as well as if she had a dozen pair of eyes, and her two children, young St. Paul and pretty Miss Samuels would sing to her playing, all three of them making music fit for the angels to listen to, until it got too dark for the chant books to do any good; then they'd all walk home to the little parsonage the fire-flies lighting their way back, with their tiny lanterns."

It was this sight that Delphine declared she would see—these sounds she would hear. Harmless as was the curiosity, it was destined not to be gratified without an interlude not laid down in the programme of her expectations.

"Blucher," she said, presently, rather loudly and cheerily—(to keep up the dog's courage, maybe) "do you believe in ghosts?"

As an abstract question of private opinion, I do not believe Blucher did—but just at that critical moment, as if to revolutionize his views upon that subject, there appeared in the shady pathway before them, a figure white enough, and startling enough to have been either a ghost, or one of the sheeted dead for whom the forest coffins were waiting.

The sensate being, who was suddenly convinced that ghosts were not only possible but highly probable visitants of this earth, uttered a nervous little squeak, and stood stock still.

The insensate creature, to whom ghosts were no more awe-inspiring than any other tramps, showed two rows of very white teeth, and uttered a growl full of menace.

Upon which the ghost's white linen arms went up deprecatingly, and it proclaimed its nationality by exclaiming in agitated French:

"En nom Dieu—que voulez vous, Mademoiselle?"

So, after all, it was flesh and blood: very thin and pallid looking flesh, with scarcely quantum sufficit of blood, and the white linen summer apparel, though ghostly in color, was quite fashionable in cut.

The young lady, whom "two lions rolled into one" were to prove powerless to intimidate, heaved a sigh of inexpressible relief and uttered an imperative: "Down Blucher!"

Upon which it was the ghost's turn to heave a sigh of inexpressible relief. Loquacity rapidly superseded terror in its frivolous soul:

Mademoiselle, j'admire le soubriquet de votre chien."

But preventing a savage beast from making his supper off an attenuated Frenchman is one thing, and stopping to chat with that Frenchman is quite another. Miss Staunton drew her small person up with dignity, uttered what was meant for a whistle, and essayed to pass on toward her goal.

Distress flashed into the foreigner's pale face:

"N'alkez pas! I am—what do you say? —malade. Entendez. I give mon exposé."

Now, without being a mistress of French, Delphine comprehended the language sufficiently to recognize the stranger's desire to detain her.

Should she hurl back some English-French for his French-English by way of intimidation, or hurry forward without waste of either language?

Best hurry forward.

A nervous grasp upon the boa which was thrown loosely over her shoulders made her start, and glance fearfully at her detainer. His eyes, glowing with feverish brightness were fixed imploringly upon her. His breath, hot and quick, fanned her cheek.

With one bound the girl was beyond his reach, leaving the boa in his hands.

"You wretch, how dare you! Touch me again and I will make Blucher pin you to the first tree."

Her words conveyed no meaning to the foreigner's bewildered senses. Her flashing eyes and significant gesture to—

ward the monstrous dog conveyed a great deal.

Submissively the daring hands were folded over the Frenchman's heart. Quietly he bowed and motioned her to pass on.

"Mademoiselle meestakes. Je suis un gentilhomme." I am désorienté."

But Delphine had but little faith in gentlemen who were désorienté and wandering about in the woods. Blucher should keep him where he was, until she had found her way out of this lonely spot.

"Watch him, Blucher," was the order she gave, and the well-trained animal knew he was simply to detain, but not injure his prisoner.

Better had it been for the poor prisoner had he been equally well-informed: for, when the hard-hearted young lady walked coolly forward, leaving his four-footed custodian glaring at him with his fiery eyes, and showing those sharp, white teeth ominously, if he did but shift his position from one travel-worn leg to the other, despair seized upon him and he cursed the unlucky chance which directed his vagrant steps towards the woods, which had promised shelter for his fever-racked frame, but had turned out to be a den of wild beasts.

Nor is he much to be blamed for so classifying his shaggy bailiff.

Knowing full well that Blucher was better than a pair of handcuffs for restless evil-doers, Delphine walked quickly, but with placid pleasure through the short skirt of woods now intervening between her and the church.

The sound of the organ floated sweetly out on the calm evening air. They were there, then! Presently the united voices of brother and sister swelled deliciously above the notes of the organ—and slipping quietly up into the rose-shielded porch, she entered into her reward.

The fire-flies were lighting their small lanterns in rapid succession, but there she sat as motionless as a little church mouse—fully intending to slip up and be gone when she heard them closing the organ.

But night was upon her! Blucher was away off with that horrid Frenchman! She dared not encounter him again. She was frightened. Why didn't Dan come? He said he would. Her fears had made her careless of the sounds within the church. She was gazing anxiously down

the dreary looking road, praying almost that Dan's burly figure might loom up from the woods.

"Am I mistaken in thinking this is my young neighbor, Miss Staunton?"

Delphine started and crimsoned with embarrassment, but she had her wits sufficiently about her to place her hand confidently in the one the pastor held out.

"I have been stealing some very pleasant moments; I walked from home to hear your music; Sergeant Danbury was to come for me, but has not; I left my dog watching an impertinent foreigner in the woods, and so here I must wait until Dan comes for me. Please, though, don't let me detain you, I'm not a bit afraid to sit here until they come for me, for I can see the lights in your windows and they look friendly"—she spoke with nervous haste to account for her lonely presence.

"Which I should certainly not be, if I let my young neighbor sit here, like a misdirected package, to be kept until called for. But before we talk about home let me introduce my mother and sister. You are one of my flock, so long as you sojourn at the homestead, and, as your pastor, I think I may presume so far."

"Oh! thank you; nothing would give me more pleasure than to know you as my pastor. I was in church last Sunday."

"I saw you there."

Delphine wondered if it were quite orthodox for the minister to see anybody when he was in the pulpit. Ought he not to forget everything but God and the angels? She did not pursue her theological ruminations very far, however, for she was being formally introduced to the blind Mrs. Samuels and the sweet-faced sister of her pastor friend.

She was urged to go over to the parsonage and there await the coming of Sergeant Danbury. But a great fear had seized upon her, and she stoutly declared she must go home at once. Dan would come across the Frenchman; see Blucher there, recognize her boa, not be able to understand anything about it at all; and Dan was so big and the foreigner so little, who knew but what murder might come of it all? She must go, she said nervously. Seeing her determination, the Rev. Mr. Samuels quietly drew her arm within his and turned toward the woods.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MYSTERY.

"Women have tongues of craft and hearts of gulle,
They will, they will not; fools that on them trust;
For in their speech is death, hell in their smile."

—Tasso.

Mr. Morgan was waiting with a conveyance at the depot when Eleanor reached Wickam.

"What is it, Max?" was her second inquiry. Her first was: "Nothing is wrong with Delphine, is it?"

"God only knows!" he answered, voice and face full of worry; "trouble ahead for the child, I am afraid."

(Max always used that definite article as if there was but one single child in the world.)

"For Delphine! In what shape and from what quarter?"

"In the shape of a *soi-disant* mother, from an unknown quarter."

"A mother!"

"Let me tell you quickly all I know myself."

Then Max entered into a hurried account of the strange occurrence which had necessitated his telegram. Hurried, because there were reasons why he wished to conclude the recital before they were deposited at their own door.

This was what he told her:

He had just settled himself with a freshly lighted cigar, after having rolled Evelyn's easy chair out upon the verandah, and they were silently enjoying the delicious fragrance wafting toward them from his splendid night-blooming jessamine, when, without premonition of wheels or any other sound of approach, they heard the front gate open, then swing slowly backward on its hinges, as if leaving a reluctant hand, after which footsteps, hardly more audible than a cat's would have been, fell upon the gravel approach to the house.

The hall lamp presently showed them a female figure, walking quickly toward the steps with a mincing, noiseless tread; very much as one might walk if trying to creep up on something or somebody unawares.

When she reached the door, Max had met her with a polite invitation to walk in, taking it for granted that it was some would-be client, whose business was of such vital importance, in her own estimation, that it could not wait for regular office hours.

"When I got her into the broad glare

of the lamp," said Max, essaying the description with his man's clumsy tongue, "it required an effort on my part not to let my gaze of polite attention degenerate into a stare of absolute rudeness, such a queer-looking body it was. She was an elderly woman, who may once have been handsome, but never refined. She represents herself as poverty stricken now, and apologizes with ill-bred profusion for her shabby appearance. Its shabbiness one could pardon, but there is a tawdry pretension to style about her whole outfit, which is simply disgusting. She had one good feature only. That is her eye, but it gives you no pleasure. It is so large and tender and dark that you are ready to call it glorious, until you notice that, splendid as her eyes are, and vain as she might pardonably be of them, she never lets them rest fully and squarely upon you, even while she is talking to you. There is a furtive unrestful look about them; she holds her head slightly bowed in speaking, and when compelled to flash her lustrous eyes up at you, instead of sending them with the pretty woman's don't-you-admire-them look, she drops the lids over them, as if they were tale-bearers that must be put into dark closets."

There Miss Morgan ventured an interruption:

"You legal men are so suspicious, that you are very apt to manufacture expressions for people's eyes."

"No. Her eyes are untrustworthy; and then when she spoke, I thought of cats, as I had done when she was creeping up on us from the garden, through the dark. Her words came with a sort of velvety purr, if you can imagine such a thing."

"I will try to, but go on."

"Miss Morgan lived here, did she not?" she purred.

"She did, I told her."

"Miss Eleanor Morgan was it not? the lady who had charge of William Staunton's daughter?"

"The same."

"She wished to see he."

"Miss Morgan or Miss Staunton?"

"Both eventually; just now, Miss Morgan."

"You were away, I then told her; could she not inform me what her business with you was?"

"Could I not, on the other hand, di-

rect her now to find you? Her business was of a delicate nature and she preferred confiding in one of her own sex."

"I could, if the character of her business warranted my so doing; without wishing to compel her confidence, I must know at least the nature of it."

"It was but the natural desire to see her darling daughter!"

"Her daughter!"

"Her daughter, Delphine Staunton," she repeated, so calmly and deliberately that, impostor though I believed her to be, I could only stare at her in wordless amazement. My confusion emboldened her; she stared back at me with those untrustworthy eyes, with what appeared to me the malicious triumph of a gambler who has just trumped his adversary's ace.

"I could think of but one thing to say: But Miss Staunton is an orphan, madame."

"So the poor darling has thought for a sad while; I am come to prove the happy contrary to her."

"To prove?"

"To prove, monsieur." She purred in her accented English, for although she handles our language glibly, it is evidently an acquired accomplishment.

"Then, as I knew so little of William Staunton's affairs, I was forced to parley with her, instead of sending her to the right-about, as I so longed to do. I know next to nothing of Mr. Staunton's family relations. My sister is better informed; return here, Friday evening, and you can have an interview with Miss Morgan; upon which she bade me good evening, and stole out into the dark again, mumbling something about her servant at the gate. God knows I wish it might have been never to emerge from that darkness again."

Eleanor had spoken only once during this strange recital, the two miles intervening between the depot and their cottage was accomplished. As Max was assisting her from the carriage, she said, quite slowly, with the deliberation of conviction:

"Max! she is an impostor. There will be work for your lawyer's brains—for to you I shall entrust her detection."

"But the motive for the imposition?"

"Delphine is—"

"Rich," she was about to say—"and this impostor knows it;" but she remembered herself just in time to preserve

her promise of secrecy to the dead, so she substituted an echo of his own words:

"God only knows."

"I expected it! she is here already," said Max, as they came within sound of the soft, treacherous foreign tongue.

She was talking to poor Evelyn, who, while listening politely, was wishing nervously that the carriage would come back with Max and Eleanor, and that Eleanor would be able to settle this horrid woman's business, coming there with her mystery and greasy silk-dress to disgrace their precious Delphine.

She cried out eagerly: "There they are now," at the first foot-fall on the verandah.

The foreigner stopped chattering and posed.

"My precious one," she cried rushing raptuously forward as Mr. Morgan's tall figure appeared within the parlor door, heralding, as she presumed, Delphine's appearance.

A cold-eyed stately woman gazed down upon her, petrifying her gushing intentions into the most ludicrous awkwardness.

One claw-like hand was promptly substituted for two extended arms.

Miss Morgan simply bowed, she had better employment for her own hands in unbuttoning her gloves.

"No Delphine! Oh! the disappointment! What have you done with my sweet baby?"

"Madame!" there was ice enough in Eleanor's voice to have frozen the words before she could utter them; "my brother has told me of the remarkable claim you have come here to urge. Permit me to say, I believe it to be a false one. Incontestable proof of your relationship must be given me, before I can allow my ward to be annoyed by your presence. Are you prepared to give such proof?"

"Lacerating as it is to a mother's feelings to hear her presence spoken of as an 'annoyance' to the babe she has nourished at her bosom, I shall for the present, Miss Morgan, put my own feelings of pride aside. Had I not been furnished with such proofs, noble lady, how vain my present errand! I do not resent your natural suspicion of me, had it been less, I should have doubted the sincerity of your interest in my sweet child. Are you ready to hear the whole melancholy story? I promise you it shall

make clearest sunshine of what must now seem midnight mystery. It is a long story, and one harrowing to my feelings to relate. May I beg it may be for your ears alone?"

Perhaps it was the fear, for all her brave scepticism, that the woman's story might contain some slur upon the memory of the man who had filled her own heart so completely in the long ago, which made Eleanor consent readily to hear it in private.

She addressed her reply to her brother rather than to the petitioner.

"I believe I should prefer a private interview, Max. Rest assured you shall hear all that has any bearing on Delphine's welfare. I will know myself, first, what this (she hesitated just long enough to reject the word 'lady') individual has to say, in my own room."

"You doubt me!" was the first thing the individual had to say, when she found herself alone with Miss Morgan.

"I do." One would have thought that disbelief in all shabby genteel foreigners was an article of faith with Eleanor, so promptly and decidedly she said, "I do," in that clear ringing voice of her's.

"Naturally. Ah, my dearest Miss Morgan, you do not know how every indication of your sterling independence and lofty integrity of character appeals to the mother in my breast. I know my sweet child must have grown up under such guardianship into a brave, good girl. I thank you—I—"

But as Miss Morgan had not consented to this interview solely for the pleasure of hearing her effusive visitor gush, she coldly interrupted her.

"Confine yourself to your story, madame, I will excuse you from all personal comments, however flattering, until your right to make them is sufficiently established to divest them of impertinence. I am waiting anxiously for your promised proofs."

"Naturally," came once more with a gentle purr from the feline stranger's lips. Her amiable imperturbability was marvellous to witness.

Then by way of slipping her into the groove of narration: "Mr. Staunton's wife was a Frenchwoman, named Tricon," said Miss Morgan.

"Precisely; Celestine Tricon, born at Privas, in the Department of Ardèche, April 4th, 18—." The parish register of Privas could not have rendered a

more accurate account of that important event.

While giving her name, date of birth, and natal place, she had slipped off her glove and taken from the third finger of her left hand a well-worn gold ring.

"Please look at that," she laid it upon Eleanor's lap.

Eleanor looked, and saw on the inside: "W. S. to C. T.; married, November 6th, 18—."

The date of William Staunton's marriage Eleanor Morgan knew by heart. This graven date tallied. "Well," she said handing it back into the claw-like hand, "that does not satisfy me."

"And at that." The stranger offered a locket, worn around her neck, attached to an exceedingly greasy ribbon, as her second proof. With fingers not quite steady Eleanor touched the spring. She knew very well what she was going to see. The case opened and William Staunton's face, not white and weary as she had last seen it, but bright and handsome as she loved best to remember it, looked up at her, with the laughing eyes and the careless droop of the dark moustache, that had so charmed her own girlish fancy. If she mistook not, this was the identical locket which he had brought as his first *gage d'amour*, when she had promised to be his wife, and which she had sent back when writing him word he must disprove certain reports before she could keep her promise.

He was proud and resentful and stood upon his dignity; she was proud and obstinate and stood upon her rights; so the breach widened and widened, until a great gulf yawned, across which they could no longer see each other, much less clasp pardoning hands, and the life currents which should have followed joyously together wandered farther and farther asunder, his growing foul and muddy, her's becoming stagnant—all for the want of three brave little words: "I was wrong."

Did all this surge through Eleanor's brain as she looked somewhat wistfully down on the bright face in the locket? Perhaps. For this time her voice sounded tired, as if it had been with her a long journey into the past since last heard.

"Very well, what more?"

"And at that." Her tormentor spread out upon her knee a time-creased paper.

It was proof third; a flawless certificate of marriage, between this shabby foreigner with the cowardly eyes and her own one-time lover so fastidious and elegant.

"Very well," she said again, struggling fiercely against conviction; "your three proofs are staggering but not incontestable. What proof have I that you are the rightful owner of that ring, that picture, or that certificate? Circumstantial evidence is all that you have so far offered."

Wounded pride, shocked sensibility, pained feeling, all struggled for place in the untrustworthy eyes, which rested reproachfully upon this unbelieving woman for a short second.

"The time will come, dear lady," and the purr threatened to degenerate into a wail, "when you will appreciate the effort it costs me not to display any resentment at your cruel suspicions. But I can be patient. Now, may I ask you one question only? Did William Staunton ever tell you that his wife was dead?"

The question was a telling one. It flashed upon Eleanor that he never had. Hold. Possibly the letter in her desk, upon which was written: "To be read only in case of trouble from abroad" might elucidate this matter. She had supposed it related to Delphine's money and had never given it a thought in all the peaceful years the orphan girl had been under her care. She half rose to bring this letter. Then sat down again. She would wait. She would hear all but tell nothing. She and Max would read that letter together, and take counsel over this trouble which was looming big for the darling of their hearts. A life long habit of self-control stood her in good stead just now. It helped her to answer calmly: "In so many words, no, by inference, yes. But we are wasting time with this interchange of question and answer. Please put your story into concise form and let me hear it."

"With pleasure, my dear Miss Morgan. As this ring and this certificate of marriage have already informed you, I, Celestine Tricon, was married to William Staunton on the sixth day of November, 18—. Before I became acquainted with my glorious William, I had not thought to ever have loved anything mortal but my revered papa. Ah! such a noble, stately, distinguished man,

was he. He was all the thing I had to love in the world. No mother, no sister, no brothers; nothing but father and I to make a world for each other. Then he brought William home with him one day, and I believe it was knowing how happy it would make my father, that first made me love my husband. We were married; then it was papa, William and I who filled the world; afterward came my baby girl, and the world was just as full as could be of loved ones and joy. Oh! how good the great God and my earthly father and William were to me; they kept a jealous guard over the very breezes that blew upon baby and me.

"At last God seemed to repent him of my great happiness. He wanted to remind me that he was all-powerful. He gave the devil guardianship of my lot. The devil's first commission was given to a fiend who had begged for my hand, and, coming from abroad to find me married, he waylaid and murdered the father who was more than all the world besides; it was my fault, you see. If I had not been in the world, he could not have loved me, and would not have killed the father who refused me to him. Then God in pity deprived me of the power to think, which had become so torturing. I went insane, is that as you would say?" She paused in her narrative with an inquiring look.

"You speak our language marvellously well," said Miss Morgan, somewhat sneeringly; "you need no assistance."

"Ah! thank you. So glad do you make me. Imagine a mother devoting a year to frantic endeavors to overcome all obstacles to communication with her own child, and my acquirement will cease to be marvellous. Moreover, my William almost made me speak his language."

"Go on, if you please."

"I went insane. And then I was happy. I thought no more of the murdered father, the lonely husband, the forlorn little baby at home. The asylum garden was my Eden, I was Eve regnant in it. There was but one trouble could come to me. And it came often at first, then ceased. My Eden had a serpent. It was a handsome, glossy, shining, creeping serpent, that would come to me and try to coil itself about me. It looked at me with eyes like William's. I loathed it. I spurned it. It would creep nearer and nearer, un-

til in my blind fury and terror I would lash at it and foam in my anguish.

"Then they would come about me and soothe, and tell me it was no serpent, but William, the husband I loved so well. I knew they lied, for the idea of William coming to me in the shape of a serpent! The serpent stayed away from me after awhile, and then I was a happy Eve with my beautiful garden all to myself."

"All of which, though possibly interesting in the extreme to the medical faculty, I will spare you the recital of."

"As you please, dear lady. I will go on, then, to my restoration. For more than three senselessly happy years I was an inmate of the asylum. Then I was pronounced well.

"My baby! William!" were the first same words I spoke. There was but one familiar face about me. It was my cousin, Virginie Tricon, who had devoted her lonely life to my shattered one. She told me tenderly how I had driven William from me with jibes and curses, calling him serpent and other vile names; he had ceased visiting me because it was too agonizing to find himself an object of loathing to me. The physicians assured him that I could not recover. He had made arrangements for my maintenance, and had left for America.

"Then Monsieur Brousseau was sent for. Delphine's guardian, as you know. He came. Talked kindly and promised me that William should be back with me as soon as electricity and steam could bring him.

"From that instant I resumed my English studies. William had never allowed me to converse in any other language with him, desiring that our little daughter should from earliest childhood understand his and my native tongue equally well. But during my illness I had used only my own language.

"I went to a house in the country with my cousin, where I drank fresh milk, walked and studied English, so I would not seem like a stranger to my baby when they brought her.

"Monsieur Brousseau came again in two weeks' time. I saw his carriage at the gate. I was not sent for. I eavesdropped. I heard him tell my cousin that William was dead. Then, they had to take me back to the asylum once more. I was no happy Eve, this time. I

was a fawn, and the hunters were always in pursuit of me with hound and horn. My life was an agony.

"This hideous fancy wore itself away, too, and once more they called me well. To find my child was all I asked now, To America I must go. Monsieur Brousseau was good and kind. He gave me money from my allowance.

"Delphine is rich, but I am poor. I will never touch one cent of her money. No, though my poverty compels me to come before you thus shabby, I, who have never known a want ungratified. He placed me in the care of a New York family, about to return to their own country. They were kind people. I talked English incessantly with them. They heard my story and appreciated my dread of not being able to communicate with my own child. At last I am here, pining to clasp that precious form to a mother's breast—yearning to hear that sweet voice say 'mother.'"

She paused to wipe away the briny tears which impeded her vision.

Miss Morgan had listened with profound attention, eagerly watching for some flaw in the statement which might stamp this impostor; none occurred.

"You say you have a letter for me from Monsieur Brousseau?"

"I have a letter introducing me. But, dear lady, how will you be made to believe it genuine? You, whose candid eyes still say to me, I doubt you?"

"Monsieur Brousseau's style of composition and chirography are very peculiar. They would be hard to imitate."

"Precisely! His letters read like scraps from Victor Hugo. Jerkily, do they not?"

The comparison was so just that before taking the letter into her hand Eleanor was convinced that Monsieur Brousseau had written it. She read it. If it was not from Delphine's guardian, it would take a keener detective than herself to prove the forgery.

She rose to conclude the interview: "Madame, will you give me a day or two in which to consider all you have told me? There is too much at stake for unweighed words or hasty action."

Madame consented with the magnanimity of a victor, and took her departure, leaving Miss Morgan rebellious in soul, but convinced in reason

CHAPTER IX.

A STRANGER AND SICK.

"The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of man like flowers."
—Wordsworth.

Had Blucher been left to the devices and desires of his own heart he would have supped luxuriously off the Frenchman's calves. But "watch him" and "seize him" are orders of widely differing import to any well educated dog, and such Blucher prided himself upon being. He had been ordered to "watch him;" so he just planted himself squarely across the forest pathway, fixed his victim with his great blood-shot eyes, and "watched" him, with a vigilance absolutely agonizing to the object of it.

It was a study for the psychologist; the cringing terror, the wild anxiety in the face of the intellectual being—man; the calm determination and rugged serenity upon that of the inferior being—the brute.

The road by which the luckless human had entered this vale of horrors lay at his back. He would imitate the crafty cray-fish and proceed by receding. He would walk backwards, so slowly and softly that the dog should never be able to detect the motion. Fixing his eyes, full of terror, upon his jailer mastiff, he essayed the first backward step. Cautiously his right leg was stretched behind him to its utmost capacity, and the varnished boot pertaining thereto dropped noiselessly upon the grassy ground. Blucher advised him by a deep-throated growl not to attempt a second. In frantic haste, the left leg of the prisoner joined its adventurous fellow, resuming the motionless although somewhat tremulous position they had maintained ever since Delphine had issued her heartless commands.

Wearily heedful of the dog's advice, the prisoner stood still, sending an upward glance toward the trees once in awhile, either calculating the possibilities of climbing one, whose branches stretched tantalizingly just beyond his reach, or, maybe, praying for a deliverer. Then he would glance behind him, prepared to welcome a bottomless pit would the earth but yawn for his release. Again to the right and to the left he sends his searching glances, wondering vaguely if the whole population of this strange country is included in a vixenish

young lady and a spiteful dog. But nothing appeared to solve his doubts or ease his torment. The emerald velvet branches of the trees closed around him and about him on every side, like beautiful allies of his brute enemy, determined that through them no egress should he find.

He was sick, weary, consumed by fever. It would at least be some mitigation of his discomfort if he could lie down at the root of a tree. This time it was the cunning of the serpent he would emulate. He would wriggle into a recumbent posture. Blucher informed him, by a growl deeper-throated and more prolonged than the first, wriggling was as objectionable as running, and that nothing but absolute quietness would satisfy the demands of justice. A supplementary bark informed him, further, that if he consulted his truest interests he would cease all futile efforts at escape.

Although Blucher was a native born citizen of America, and growled in the purest English, it was astonishing how much more felicitous he was in making himself understood than were his two book-assisted betters. The dog understood the foreigner, and the foreigner understood the dog without a shadow of difficulty, whereas the dog's mistress and the Frenchman had failed ingloriously. What an intellectual triumph!

The shades of night were rapidly rendering objects at a distance undiscernible, when close at hand loomed a massive figure, hurrying forward with tremendous strides. It was Sergeant Danbury, late and anxious.

A shout of distress from the imprisoned Frenchman, a vivacious bark of recognition from Blucher, and he stood upon the scene of action.

Generally speaking, Sergeant Danbury was not what you would call a quick man, but, coming into the woods on his way to bring the little lady home later (by reason of those "bothersome trees") than he should have been, and anxious, as his foolish heart always was about that wonderfully precious piece of mortality, seeing the dog, who had been sent with her, without her (and never had he known Blucher to desert a charge); seeing a breeched, coated and moustachioed thing, standing there, where he certainly did not belong, with his hands clasped about the white boa,

which the little lady had flung with such saucy defiance about her pretty head, when telling him boldly she would go through these very woods, all looked darkly suspicious; and the fierce anxiety at his honest heart spurred stolid Dan into a quickness of motion and of utterance utterly foreign to his nature.

"Where's the child?" he shouted, rather than asked, as with a bound he stood towering over the quaking foreigner, whose secret conviction that this country was not the abode of civilization must have been sensibly increased by the blazing wrath in the face of this new enemy.

The new-comer's words were meaningless, his looks were portentous. Politeness was a powerful weapon where he came from. He would employ it to exorcise this demon before him, thought the Frenchman: "Bienvenu! Monsieur, Bienvenu!" he cried, as airily as fright and weariness would permit.

"D—n your foreign gibberish, what are you doing with that scarf (seizing it savagely)? Where's her it belongs to? Curse you, Blucher, is this the way you take care of your mistress? Where is she, brute! You're generally good enough at answering questions after your own fashion; where's this cursed Frenchman hidden her at? show her! Fetch her, brute! fetch her!"

Blucher eyed the excited Sergeant knowingly; glanced down the road then back at the Frenchman. I think he wanted to say: Calm yourself, she's all right; attend to the prisoner, here all the honor lies.

But Dan was too excited to translate Blucher with his usual happy success, so he glowered back to the Frenchman.

"Monsieur," said that sufferer, smiling with the heroism of a staked martyr, "Je vous embrace a bras ouverts."

"Who!"

"Monsieur, je suis malade."

"See here! By the good God above us, if you don't find some way of answering my questions I'll pound you into a jelly. See here, young lady," (flaunting the boa wildly in the foreigner's face by way of indicating a female presence).

"Young lady," wrapping it about his big shoulders to increase the pantomimic delusion. "Young lady! where? and Dan pointed frantically with both outstretched hands to the four cardinal

points as if questioning space as to the whereabouts of his wayward idol.

The Frenchman gazed fixedly at the old soldier, desperately manipulating the boa, to the imminent risk of the flimsy texture. He followed with solemn attention the northward, southward, eastward, and westward movement of his ten fleshly interrogation points, then mentally revised his first impression of the country. It was a lunatic instead of a barbarous people, among which a malicious fate had cast him. Lunatics were to be soothed, not exhorted.

"Mon pauvre! Laissez tranquille! Que voulez? D'où venez-vous?" his voice was a very lullaby. Further parley was worse than useless. There stood this moustachioed thing in possession of Delphine's boa. There stood Blucher, looking and acting more senselessly than ever he had looked or acted before! There was not the little lady! where was she? It was plain palpable villany. This villain wandering through the woods had made the beautiful darning; he had, had—thought became insupportable! inaction, suffocation!

(A parenthetic plea for Sergeant Danbury. The "Children of the Abbey," and the "Mysteries of Udolpho" and "Somebody on Landscape Gardening" were all the books he studied.

A huge fist was suddenly insinuated inside the white embroidered necktie encircling the slender neck of the foreigner.

"Speak!" roared the Sergeant, making speaking a physical impossibility, as he twisted the cravat until the purple of the visage above it contrasted brilliantly with its pure whiteness. His victim complied with the unreasonable request by a gurgling and a choking splutter.

"Speak!" his captor roared again, twisting him on to his tip-toes, "The little lady! What have you done with her?"

Great drops stood out upon the Frenchman's purple brow like diamonds in an amethyst setting, but he only kept gurgling on in a jerky fashion, like a brook over rocky impediments.

"You won't speak won't you?" and with emphatic precision the Sergeant brought his stout walking cane across the spotless linen coat, loosening at the same instant his hold upon the throat of his victim.

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" gasped the frightened wretch, glaring half-crazed about him.

"Where is the little lady?" With every stroke of the cane the interrogation was repeated in louder and quicker tones, Blucher accompanying each blow with a ringing bark of approval, until the words fairly resounded with, "little lady! little lady!"

"Dan!"

Above the din of blows, barks and gasping expostulation came that monosyllable clear silvery, imperious,

With a shout of gladness Sergeant Danbury dropped his upraised stick and cried aloud:

"Thank God," flinging his victim aside with a careless thrust, the little lady was safe, what else mattered?

With a groan and a muttered

"Mon Dieu! Quelle campagne!" the Frenchman fell swooning at the feet of his tormentors.

"Dan! Dan! what have you done?" Delphine sprang forward full of fright and remorse, for somehow she felt blameworthy; she stooped in helpless pity over the fallen man. Close after her came conscience-stricken Dan. Lifting the head of the stranger, he laid it tenderly against his shoulders, then the minister, wondering and pitiful, and Blucher sniffing gravely at his fallen foe, completed the group about him.

In his haste to escort Delphine through the woods the minister, after seeing his mother inside her own gate, had hurried back to the church. Thus it happened that the vinaigrette which he always carried for that carefully-tended parent, was still in his possession. He hastened to apply the restorative.

Nothing broke the solemn quiet of the waiting group until Dan, upon whose tender soul remorse was a heavy and unwonted weight, began stuttering out all his anxiety, his fears and his unjust treatment of the man who lay there so still and white, utterly unconscious how full of pity were the faces of his late persecutors.

"You foolish, foolish Dan," said Delphine, never taking her eyes off the pale face before them. "He's coming to," she said presently, very softly, as if fearful of frightening him back into unconsciousness.

The foreigner's eyes opened languidly. They opened upon the holy face of Harris Samuels. Had an angel come down to release him from those demons who

had been tormenting him? He believed one had.

"Vous parlez français!" It was a plea not a question.

Happily, Mr. Samuels did.

Oh! the joy that little "yes" carried with it.

Then he told the tender-eyed minister, speaking rapidly and gesticulating with animation, how he had lost his way, how he had been feeling as if fever-stricken all day; how he had met the young lady and begged her to tell him where he could find shelter for the night; how everybody had misunderstood and maltreated him; how he did not know what to do, nor where to go. All of which the minister put into good English for the benefit of Delphine and Sergeant Danbury, adding that he would take the stranger back to his own house.

But Delphine pleaded for an opportunity to make the *amende honorable* by taking him to her home to be nursed well, and remorseful Dan added his petition to hers, asking the minister to tell the French gentleman how sorry he was for having given him such an un-called-for thrashing.

All of which the minister put into good French for the benefit of the foreigner. Pardoning hands were clasped all around, and the Frenchman soon rose to his feet, declaring that he believed half his malady had been *ce bête terrible*, for Blucher was not included in the general amnesty.

So the minister, whose heart was much roomier than his home, consented to relinquish his hospitable intentions in favor of the Staunton house, and the whole party was put in motion in that direction, as amicable and merry as a party of returning pick-nickers. Only Blucher seemed to think that the dignity of the family had not been properly sustained, and stalked majestically apart. For which the stranger found it easy in his heart to forgive him, not feeling quite tranquil about his calves yet.

In a fine fright at their prolonged absence, they found Mother Danbury pacing the length of the terrace to and fro, peering out with dim and spectacled eyes, into the thickening darkness, when with the aid of the best sunlight, she could just see comfortably a foot or two beyond her own nose.

In a fine rage, they threw her when they reached home, with not even so

much as a scratch to compensate her for her anxiety of soul, bringing with them a "French tramp," as she promptly christened the stranger, to give her "more work to do, that had more than ten men could attend to now."

"But he is a stranger, Mother Dan, and ye must take him in."

"And be took in by him, for thanks."

"And he is sick, Mother Dan, and ye must minister to him."

"I never set up for hospital nurse for foreign tramps, child, though there's none more ready than Salina Danbury to obey Bible teachings," and she hustled off to see a bed prepared.

CHAPTER X.

AN UNPROVEN LIE.

"I am for fumigating the atmosphere, when I suspect that falsehood, like pestilence, breathes around me."—*Carlyle*.

"A mystery!" Max almost groaned the word out, so hateful did it seem to him to have anything bordering upon the mysterious or unaccountable coming into their crystalline lives, a dark secret coming to hide itself in the home where the sunlight of truth and sincerity had access to every nook and crevice.

Maxwell Morgan was proud, with the pride not of the born or manufactured aristocrat, whose money will bridge every chasm, clothe every skeleton, but with the pride of a brave, strong-hearted man, who, inheriting an honest and unstained name, keeps it honest and unstained, and cares not to have anything defiling come too near its possessors. This suspicious woman, with her suspicious story, was the nearest approach to the disreputable that had ever come into his life. He wished he could fling her aside as he had flung other noxious things out of his pathway, but he could not, so he only uttered that groaning protest.

Eleanor had come straight from her interview with the strange woman, and repeated accurately every word that had passed between them, to Max. How she hoped that the lawyer, with his cooler head and professional acumen, might detect some weak point in the story, where she, with her woman's excitability and that strange tugging at her heart-strings, which warped her judgment while she

looked at that face in the picture, had been unable to discover.

Max had listened very attentively, had asked as many questions as if cross-examining a witness, had sat combing his thick hair back from his splendid forehead with nervous fingers, had looked up at her with gravely-troubled eyes, and found, after all his thinking, nothing more consolatory to say than, "A mystery!"

"Max, do you believe that this woman, with the mean face and coward's eyes is the mother of our brave-eyed Delphine?"

"It is hard to say 'Yes,' and yet how can I say 'No?'"

"Maybe," said Evelyn, the sweet saint who tried to find some good thing in everything which bore the mark of the Great Maker, and who pitied when she could not praise; "maybe her eyes were not cowardly eyes before her trouble, and maybe the terror of that time stamped the meanness on her face."

"Perhaps," said Miss Morgan, absently.

"Has Monsieur Brousseau ever made any allusion to this matter in his letters, Eleanor? It seems strange that he should not."

"Remember, brother, that M. Brousseau's letters have always been the most formal business communications, containing the stereotyped announcement that: 'Enclosed I would please find quarterly remittance for benefit of Mademoiselle Delphine Staunton,' with the usual expression of hope that his ward continued in the enjoyment of good health; stop, let me look. I remember now, and it must have been just about the time this—she started from France—one of his letters contained a postscript which puzzled me at the time, but seemed of no manner of importance. I will bring that letter."

From the systematically filed letters of the trustees, it was easy to extract the one she wanted. She read it out to Max and Evelyn:

"Allow me to tender my congratulations to my esteemed young ward upon her recent happy acquisition."

It had been a riddle when read, but of no importance—it was no riddle now, but significant enough.

Then the three who loved Delphine, looked sorrowfully at each other, thinking, all of them, of the shabby woman in the greasy silk dress.

"Happy acquisition!" ejaculated

Max, with biting scorn. "You said something about a letter from Mr. Staunton," he resumed more mildly; "to be read in case of trouble from abroad. The time to read it has come, I think."

"The trouble certainly has," Eleanor answered, getting up to bring the letter, but she had no hope left that it would help them any. She was sure it was going to be a silent witness on the side of this cat-like woman.

"Read it Max," she said in a hopeless sort of voice. "it is for us all to hear."

Max read:

"MY DEAR FRIENDS: I have not told you all that concerns my child's welfare. I must write what I was not brave enough to look you in the face and speak. Delphine's mother is not dead. When I married Celestine Tricon—the only child of a retired army officer (with whom I had formed a fast friendship before meeting his daughter), the two were completely bound up in each other. Motherless as she was, all her pent-up filial devotion was centred in her stately, soldierly father. She was his all, as he was hers. He cordially sanctioned my marriage with his daughter, a piquante little beauty, full of heart and tenderness, and until after the birth of our little girl, our small family circle was a very happy one. Delphine was in her third year, when my poor Celestine was crushed to the earth by the shocking murder of the father she loved so well; the horror of the deed being augmented, when his murderer was discovered to have been a suitor for her hand, one her father had scornfully rejected, who, upon returning from abroad to find her married, had vented his disappointed passion in the base murder of an old man.

Brooding over her loss, fancying herself in some way responsible for it, it soon became evident to me that my wife's mind was suffering from some inconsolable grief. I called in physicians who confirmed my terrible suspicions. I did everything that mortal man could do available to ward off the horrible fate of insanity from poor Celestine. I travelled with her; I indulged her every whim; I sought distraction for her in every form. It was all useless. The mind failed completely. Then I sent for the only relative she had living, a young lady cousin with whom she had been cradled and reared, and placed her at the head of my household, in charge of my forlorn little child and unfortunate wife. It soon became necessary to remove Celestine to an asylum; I did it reluctantly, but deemed it best her child should not have such a picture of horror before her eyes as her only recollections of her mother. From having

been her idol, I became the object of her fiercest hatred and detestation. The sight of me lashed her into the wildest fury, so much so, that I was compelled to cease visiting her. After being assured by the physicians that her case was entirely hopeless, France became hateful to me and I returned here—enfeebled in body, weary of life. Before leaving France I installed her cousin, a lonely woman, with no ties to make the duty onerous, in charge of my wife, providing amply for their maintenance, and so arranged my financial matters that in case I never returned, there should be no trouble about my child's fortune. Everything I did possessed of is settled upon Delphine, with the pitiful reservation of her poor mother's allowance and a life annuity to the faithful cousin who has charge of her. It has appeared to me best that my girl's life should not be darkened by the knowledge of her mother's gloomy lot, and that, as she is dead to her, Delphine shall remain under the impression that the grave has closed over her mother. Even to you I have not thought it necessary to bare this hidden sore, and it is only to prevent possible trouble in the future that I do so now. Although repeatedly assured, by a council of the best physicians, that my poor wife would never leave the asylum but for her grave, time works miracles and it is possible that she may recover. In that case, of course, she will immediately join her child. You will see her. You will come to know what manner of woman took pity upon the man you so scornfully cast from you. You *will not* like her. But no matter, for the little one's sake be kind to her. For the coming of her mother *must not* deprive her of you. I believe I have said all I need to say. I hope this letter contains no disloyalty to the poor wife languishing in the insane asylum."

Dismay and conviction was written legibly on the faces of the three listening to that letter.

"Poor dear Delphine!" Evelyn's voice was almost a sob.

"'Time works miracles,' Mr. Staunton very truly says. Will it ever work the miracle of inspiring such a daughter with love for such a mother?"

Was ever such wealth of comment crowded into those two little words as Max crowded into those bitterly emphasized "such's."

"It never will," said Evelyn, stoutly. But Miss Morgan seemed stricken dumb. She sat there quietly folding up the two letters which had established this woman's claims, but neither expressed an opinion nor answered a question.

She looked at Max furtively once or twice, with such a queer look, as if, for

some reason best known to herself; she felt sorry for *him* too.

Presently she got up and went away to her own bed-room, from which she did not emerge again until the next morning.

Never before had the spirit of unrest taken up its abode unchidden under the peaceful roof of the Morgan family, but that night it reigned supreme.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FOREIGNER EXPLAINED.

"What writest thou?" The vision raised its head, And, with a look made of all sweet accord, Answered, 'The names of those who love the Lord.'

'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay, not so,' Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low, But cheerily still; and said, 'I pray thee, then Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.'"

—*Leigh Hunt.*

A painter in search of typical models for Sunshine and Shadow could not have done better than to have taken his paint-pots and brushes and the Wickam and Ballston Railroad as far as the Lodge to which Paul Weyland had gone, accompanied by his cousin Augustus Ames, each in pursuit of that *ignis fatuus*, happiness; an eternal pursuit in which they but joined a world full of planning men and yearning women—gentle folk and simple folk, the laboring many and the resting few.

Temporarily, Paul's happiness consisted in catching fish and shooting birds. A murderous order of felicity, dependent on misery and pain for its very existence; but it was positive.

On the contrary, his cousin's lay simply in the absence of pain. It was negative in its character. He was not rudely aroused from the sleep so precious to his sluggish nature, with an imperative summons to prayers when his heart was far fuller of cursing. He was not ordered into the ranks of tuneful worshippers, three times a day, on the laborious day of rest. He was not hourly condemned to quail until he felt all the manhood in him scorching in the fierce fires of self-contempt under the basilisk eye paternal.

The happiness born of pain was keen, hearty, invigorating. That springing from its mere absence was languid, feeble, placid. Analyze, ye metaphysicians!

The Judge's son cannot be better described than by calling him "Sunshiny."

Sunshine nestled in the bright rings of nut brown hair that clung caressingly about his fine broad forehead. It laughed in the merry blue eyes that had a kindly glance for every deserving fellow creature. The sunshine of happy youth was in his heart, and the sunshine of good fortune had brightened his life-way. He was not ungrateful for this sunny lot, though, maybe, not grateful in an orthodox fashion. His gratitude took the form of generous, manly, helpful sympathy toward all the less fortunate. Had he prayed it would have been the prayer of Abou Ben Adhem:

"I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men."

In particular did he pity, with that pity which is akin to love, his cousinly counterpart, the model for shadow. I think a jury of romantic young ladies would have hung on the respective titles of those two young men to be called "handsomest." The shadowy depths of Mr. Ames's great black eyes, the listless grace of his tall, slender form, the wavy black hair that tumbled over his brow and staid there for lack of energy on its owner's part to adjust it properly, looked "so romantic, so melancholy—" his beauty was of that sort which most readily appeals to the tender sympathies of very young ladies.

But Paul was not a romantic young lady; even taking his sex into consideration he was singularly free from any sentimentalism. He was essentially a healthy nature; physically, morally and mentally. He would have liked above all things to have taken a pair of good sharp shears and shorn those wavy black locks that had such a romantic trick of tumbling about Augustus's forehead, to a sensible shortness, just to have given some fresh air to the brooding brain beneath them. He wanted to chase the gloomy look away from the large eyes which gazed out upon this bright, happy world, without seeing either its brightness, or its opportunities for happiness.

He would have liked to have shaken the moral nature of the man into a brisker existence, to make him a little less "like dumb, driven cattle." He would have liked to shear him of his superfluous locks and rid him of his dreary philosophy at one brisk *coup de main*, which was Paul's favorite style of accom-

plishing all ends. But he was too finished a gentleman to fall into the good people's error of confounding sympathy with impertinence. So he treated his cousin's dreary philosophy with all apparent respect, and left his locks undisturbed in their hyacinthine flow.

"It is so easy for you, Paul," Augustus would say, whenever a subject came up in which the healthy, breezy philosophy of the one threatened to clash with the cynical moralizing of the other, "It is so easy for you, Paul, who are rich"—

Then Paul, ever ready to mete out generous allowance for the difficulties and temptations of others, would wonder, a little sadly, perhaps, if he owed all the good that was in him, all his love of the beautiful in the moral as well as the natural world, all his bright dreams of making a great and good man of one Paul Weyland, to his father's money bags.

Verily, should avarice be apotheosized into the noblest of virtues, if wealth is to exalt a man in soul, gird him in effort, expand him in brain.

The early hours of Alma Mater regulations still exerted their influence on the recently emancipated student. Five o'clock always found Paul astir with gun or fishing-rod.

Fairly saturated with the freshness of the morning, he would bound into Augustus's room on his return, lay a glittering, scaly perch upon his hot cheek, shake the well filled game bag over his head, and finally torment him into a sitting posture.

So matter-of-course had all sorts of reveillé become that Augustus paid but little heed when Paul, evidently under high pressure of excitement, bounded into his room one morning, proclaimed the hour of the day in reproachful tones, and summoned him to rise without longer delay.

"What's up?" asked Augustus, sleepily.

"Pretty much everything but your own lazy self."

"Snipe or trout?"

"News!"

"What! Eh! News? Did you shoot 'em or hook 'em?"

"Wake up, Gus! There is a minister and old Sergeant Danbury downstairs."

"A what!" Gus dreamily fancied the disagreeable possibility that coercive piety was to come into vogue in their

blessed retreat, and the Sergeant must have come along to compel attendance on the minister.

"Yes," Paul resumed vivaciously, "a soldier of the Cross and one of the Devil (if he is general-in-chief of the earthly corps), both come to breakfast with us."

"What for?"

"Because they are an hungered, most likely."

By this time Augustus was wide awake and curious enough.

"What in the deuce do you mean, Paul?"

"Just this: it seems our pretty Cousin Della is rusticating at the homestead, and in her wanderings through the woods the other evening, she stumbled on a sick Frenchman, and had him taken home to be nursed well. But it seems again he grew worse rapidly, so the preacher searched the sick man's pockets for some clue to his friends, and curiously enough, the only paper he found was a letter of introduction to me; also, a card on which the Judge had written directions for him, by which he could find me, together with a few lines explaining how the young man had come to Wickam with this letter, and had seemed keenly disappointed at not finding me and unwilling to await my return."

"Well! what does the letter of introduction say?"

"Here it is. It is from Ned Brinslow, dear old fellow; you've heard me speak of him. He's supplementing Harvard with Paris. Gad, old chum! I'd like to touch hands."

"Don't gush, read."

"DEAR PAUL: This letter will be handed to you by young M Emile Girardeau, who proposes trying to amend his broken fortunes in America, the blessed asylum of the bankrupt. His relatives (to whom I brought letters), have been good and kind to me in the extreme, and any attention you can show him I will regard as a personal favor.

"Yours in the spirit,

"N. BRINSLOW."

"We'll ride back with the two soldiers and get him."

"What ails the fellow?" asked Augustus cautiously.

"How can I tell? But, if it is confluent small-pox, here is where he belongs."

"By George! we're running a great risk."

"Well! we won't borrow trouble, at least not of the confluent small-pox kind. Will you ride over to the homestead with me?"

Augustus weighed the small-pox possibilities against the lonesome reality, if Paul should go without him, and said "Yes."

So after regaling the two soldiers on the best his bachelor establishment could furnish, Paul ordered round his own trap, and making the more sociable arrangement of putting the Sergeant with Augustus, and the minister with himself, they all started for the homestead.

The six miles which lay between the two places were quickly traversed, not so quickly, however, but that Paul had time to yield to the gentle fascinations which Harris Samuels unwittingly exercised over all with whom he came in contact. It was the fascination of manly earnestness, kindly sympathy and sincere expression, which constituted the charm as well as the power of this faithful servant of the Lord.

Had Paul and he been old college mates they could not have occupied the time of their dinner in livelier or more enjoyable converse.

Delphine met them at the hall door—"Bright, fresh and looking sweet enough to eat"—as Paul informed her while availing himself of his cousinly privileges to the extent of two hearty kisses. After greeting the others of the party, Delphine drew Paul away from them.

"Brush your hair, you barbarian, and come into the sitting-room looking your handsomest. I've something in there you'll feel like eating, sure enough."

"What, your sick Frenchman?" asked Paul, obeying her first injunction by combing his curly hair with his fingers, in front of the hat-rack mirror.

"No, hush! don't speak so loud. Oh! Paul," and she tip-toed to whisper the solemn secret in his ear: "I've got a wife here for you!"

"A wife!"

"Yes, a wife!"

"Who told you I wanted one, Miss?"

"Why of course you want one; all men want wives, and it's only those that no woman will have who say they don't want them."

"But, Del—if I have to marry—I would rather marry you."

"But, Paul, the inclination is all on your side; I'd rather not marry you, thank you; I wouldn't have any coz to love and tease me, then."

"There's Gus, we might adopt him into the family."

"He's too tombstony."

"But to return to my wife. Is mother Danbury on the anxious bench?"

"Yes, but not about you. She's wild to get my French tramp, as she calls the poor little fellow up stairs, about his business."

"I am here to gratify her most natural desire."

"Well, we'll talk about him, presently. But now let me tell you about the angel that's been coming here to help take care of him; and oh, Paul, please fall in love with her and marry her."

"I suppose my falling in love is all that is necessary; small blame to me if between a certain mother in Wickam and a certain cousin not so far away, I turn out a model of conceited jackanapism."

As Delphine looked into the handsome face of the cousin she loved so well and took such pride in, she did not believe many girls—not related, of course—could resist him.

"Well; just promise me you'll fall in love and my plan will take care of itself."

"I do, hereby, most solemnly promise and declare—"

"Hush!"

The sweetest of voices suddenly floated through the sitting-room window out to them, where they stood upon the terrace.

Not a word passed between the cousins while Lucy Samuels was singing her short, sweet ballad.

"I thought young ladies were a species of nightingale," said Paul, after expressing his sincere satisfaction at the sweetness of the voice and song, "who reserved their melodies for evenings, lamp-light and beaux."

"This one does not. She is more of a lark. She comes over every morning, and will sit there and sing for that sick man, until his face looks as calm and happy as a baby's."

"Who is your lark?"

"Lucy Samuels, sister to the minister you rode over with. Oh, Paul, she is just an angel, and she is the one I want you to fall in love with."

"I'll do my very best, coz. But what if I fail?"

"You cannot fail."

"I don't know, success in failure is very common."

"But you're going to marry her and make me happy. Now come, I'll take you to see your Frenchman. I just wanted to prepare you to look and act your best for Miss Samuels. She is aa angel, Paul, indeed she is."

"But suppose I tell you I'm not partial to angels?"

"Oh, I don't mean one of your milk-faced, butter-voiced—"

"Cheese-headed, let's have all the dairy products—"

"Angels—but a pretty, merry, useful, brisk, sensible little angel, that can make light bread as well as she can sing, and can feed chickens and make butter and read good books and talk theology, just as occasion calls for each."

"I like novelties, and, as a chicken-feeding angel is decidedly such, I think it will not be difficult to gratify your simple request in the matrimonial arrangement."

"You laugh now, but—"

"But what? I'll weep when I get her?"

"There, now, she has left the piano; we will go in. Turn around and let me look at you."

Paul stood as motionless as if on dress parade, while Delphine's big brown eyes scanned him carefully:

"Boots might be a little shinier, a little smarter hat would do no harm, but pass on; as long as you're addicted to bachelor housekeeping something must be overlooked."

With this doubtful endorsement Paul was led forward to be introduced to the sublunary angel who could talk theology, or make butter, or feed chickens, or sing ballads, as occasion called for.

CHAPTER XII.

MAKING THE BEST OF IT.

"That I made virtue of necessity,
And took it well,"—*Chaucer*.

"Too much at stake," Miss Morgan had said to the woman who laid claim to their darling, "for unweighed words or hasty action."

But after every word spoken had been weighed, after the maturest delibera-

tion upon action to be taken, what nearer were they, she and Max, the two who loved Delphine so well, to a satisfying course?

The most unobservant of mortals, coming upon the Morgans the morning after the stranger's visit, would have seen that a cloud had settled down upon this serene little household.

"I shall call in at Judge Weyland's office, on my way down town, and lay this remarkable affair before him. He is clear-brained and long-sighted, and—" Max did not seem to think it worth while to finish his sentence. "And he is a disinterested party," was what he was thinking.

"And I had better go to the Parsonage with the news," Eleanor added.

"I had rather perform my task than yours," said Max, thinking, with pity for Eleanor, of the minister's cold eyes and ungracious demeanor.

So they both went their separate ways about Delphine's business. Surely if in multitude of counsel there is wisdom, Delphine Staunton was in a fair way to be wisely cared for.

There was a heartiness of manner about Judge Weyland, a warmth of welcome in eye, hand and voice, that put one in a good humor with oneself by giving him the comfortable sensation that, of all men, he was the man most desirable to see at that particular moment. In consequence of which the majority of visitors were seen at their best in the Judge's presence.

Max liked this clear-headed, hearty-mannered Judge, worldlying though he was. He liked his big brain, his daring reasoning and his bold utterances. Although unable cordially to endorse all his liberal theories of the Creator and the created, he agreed with him in claiming for every man the important privilege of doing his own thinking, and the manly privilege of acting in accordance with the convictions resulting from that thinking.

An earnest thinker, a clear reasoner, a pure moralist himself, he did not fall into the popular error of confounding religion and morality.

Judge Weyland was an irreligious man and a moral gentleman. Above all, whatever he was, he was in reality and not in seeming. For the sincerity of his convictions and the consistency of his life, Maxwell Morgan liked him.

He stepped in, as he had said he should, to see this clear-headed uncle of Delphine's to tell him about the French claimant, and see if he could detect any weak point in the story which might assist him to prove the whole business an imposture.

"The devil!" exclaimed the Judge, calling promptly upon his patron, as Max put a period to his recital.

"What do you think of it all?"

"Patience! my dear fellow. I do not believe I have begun to think of it at all yet; my thinking apparatus has been jostled so completely out of gear by the liveliest surprise."

"It will crush that proud child to the earth. I have heard her say she could imagine no greater pain than to have to blush for one's own blood."

"Tut, man! William Staunton was a sad dog, but a true-hearted gentleman, and nothing can ever convince me he would have married a woman we cannot afford to recognize. Her troubles, perhaps, have made her look seedy and rusty. Take the woman's greasy silk dress off her, and let Mrs. Judge lend a hand in rigging her afresh before Delph sees her, and, maybe, all necessity for that painful blushing will be obviated."

"Do you mean that all the coarseness of the woman lies in the grease spots on her dress?"

"Not just exactly that, my dear boy, but not being a married man yourself, it is utterly impossible for you to conceive how largely dress does enter into the composition of the woman."

"What would Mrs. Judge say to that?"

"She would call me a 'libellous wretch,' which would in no wise vitiate my assertion."

"But—" Max's voice implied impatience with himself for having departed for a second from the matter in hand—

"you seem to take this woman's claim for granted, and are preparing for her immediate adoption into the family."

"Not at all, not at all. What I suggest was only by way of showing you how, if the thing did turn out inevitable, we might mend matters a little. I shall do my legal best to pick a flaw in the statement. And nothing would afford me keener pleasure than to inform the so-called Mrs. Staunton that her only chance of being accommodated in this neighborhood would be at the expense of the county."

"But how are we to go about proving her identity?"

"You say your sister is ready to vouch for the authenticity of Brousseau's letter of introduction?"

"She is. The most careful comparison of style and of the formation of every letter, has failed to cast any doubts upon its genuineness."

"And William's letter was written in preparation for this contingency?"

"It was written with no other motive."

"Her statement, you say, tallies in every respect with that in Staunton's letter?"

"To the most trifling circumstance."

"There is but one course, Morgan, open to us as sensible and human beings. If this woman can be classed in the same category, she will accede to our plans. We must write to M. Brousseau, sending back the letter she has presented, asking if it is genuine; requesting him to write us all he knows about this matter; also, get him to send out a photograph of William's wife."

"What you suggest I did on the morning after her first visit."

"Then there is nothing left to do but wait for his answer, warding off a meeting between her and the child until it comes."

"And then"—Max ground his teeth together.

"And then, Morgan, if the guardian substantiates this woman's claim, hard as it will be on the child, the truth will have to be told her. I will tell it myself. And we must all, by courtesy and kindness to the mother, try to elevate her into the respect of the daughter."

"Spoken kindly, Judge, but rest assured if ever Delphine Staunton comes to respect this woman, it will have to be through some at present unsuspected merit in herself. You do not know the child as I do. In her own gentle way, she is as independent in thought and action as yourself. She would appreciate our courtesy to this mother of hers, for just what it was worth; thanking us for the motive, which she will understand as clearly as if she had heard the words you have just spoken, but not thanking us for trying to hoodwink her."

"Well, we won't trouble about that, just yet;" with which they parted.

While her brother was in consultation with Judge Weyland, Eleanor was unfolding her story in the presence of the

Rev. St. John Ames, Mrs. Ames and Miss Susie Ames.

A profound silence followed her closing sentence. The minister's family was altogether too well trained to express any opinions until his dictum had gone forth as a basis for their formation, and he seemed disposed on this occasion to be very deliberate in his utterances.

At last the gray eyes, harsh and cold, fastening upon the gentle face of the wife for a focus, gave emphasis to the dictum—harsh and cold, too:

"William Staunton was the source of mental disquietude to his family during the whole of his reckless career, and this new vexation for which we are indebted to him, would lead one to conclude that the wicked do not cease from troubling when the grave receives them."

"Oh, Mr. Ames, poor, dead William!"

"Dead, it is true, Maria. Nor would I make one unjust assertion against him, dead or alive. The fact of his death, however, does not alter the fact of his irregular and blameworthy life."

"But he was an elegant gentleman to the end, poor fellow."

"Elegant gentlemen are frequently first-class scamps. I think, moreover Maria, that the apologist of an evil-doer is, in certain degree, an evil-doer also."

This by way of extinguishing Maria.

"Such a disgrace to the family, mamma!" sighed Miss Ames. "And you say she dresses shabbily, Miss Morgan, and looks coarse?"

"She will not reflect credit upon the family"—very coldly—"but the effect of her coming upon Delphine's whole future life is surely the most important consideration."

"Certainly! oh, of course, certainly! But then, you know, one hates a scandal. And people will think it so strange."

"A Frenchwoman, and, of course, a Papist!" The clergyman glowered at Miss Morgan, as if casting the whole blame of this woman's existence, nationality and Romanistic tendencies upon her unoffending shoulders.

"I presume so."

"It is a very terrible piece of business, look at it how you may," the minister's wife moaned. "If the poor woman only was not a Romanist, and did not wear a greasy silk dress—a nice calico would be much more respectable—it would be easier to reconcile oneself."

"Maria!"

"Yes, Mr. Ames."

"You are a very good woman, a most excellent good woman, but I hope your goodness of heart will not carry you to the extent of opening your arms to a foreign Papist, for the insufficient reason that she married into the family. The fact of her being your brother's wife in no way lessens her heresy. And it is doing the Church but lukewarm service to clasp hands with her revilers and persecutors."

"Oh, Mr. Ames, you must know that every desire of my heart is to glorify God by exalting His Church upon earth. I was only anxious for dear niece's sake to do the proper thing by her mother. But of course you are the best judge."

"If you are so anxious to do the proper thing, my dear, I would suggest the careful perusal of certain epistles which recommend wifely submission as a most praiseworthy virtue."

(Poor Mrs. Ames! as if she had not almost read those pale eyes sightless over that same Book, which demands perfection of sinful mortality as the price of that peace to which she was surely entitled by the law of compensation.)

"Certainly, Mr. Ames; I always try to comply with your wishes, only—"

"'Only' we will not, my dear, give any countenance to this foreign heretic."

"Is there no hope, Miss Morgan, that she may be proven an impostor?" Miss Ames's voice was querulous from excess of anxiety. "You know people will talk."

"I have no hope. Her oral statement and Mr. Staunton's written one corroborate each other so perfectly, and the letter she brings me from M. Broussau is so convincingly genuine that with all the desire in the world to disbelieve her, I am unable to do so."

There was nothing more to be said. There were no words of pity for the young girl who was to bear the brunt of this thing spoken. There was no hope of comforting words from the pastor. Eleanor had expected none when she came. She had performed her duty and was ready now to leave.

She walked homeward in a sad frame of mind. This woman's coming had marred a peaceful present and blurred a rosy future. Miss Morgan's time for day-dreams had not yet passed away. And she had been dreaming such a sweet dream about Max and brown-eyed Del-

phine before this rude awakening. Eh! well it was not the first dream she had been rudely awakened from. But it must be the last.

At her own gate she found the massive form of Sergeant Danbury.

"Just about to step in to deliver this from the little lady," he informed her.

Eleanor was conscious of feeling doubly glad at this rencontre. She was glad that the impulsive child had not come rushing back upon them just in the midst of this perplexing business, and she was glad of the opportunity to cross-examine Sergeant Danbury in the matter which was weighing so heavily on her mind. Perhaps he could identify this woman.

"I am very glad you have come down alone—" she grasped his big hand with a warmth of welcome that sent a flush of gratified pride over the old man's rugged features. "Maybe you can help us."

"Help you! I'm as willing to try, as I'm sorry to know you need help. Alex Danbury's yours to command, dear lady."

"But come in drst. You are to dine with us. There is a great deal to tell you. It all concerns your little lady."

"And maybe you'd like to read her letter before we settle down to talk."

Miss Morgan took the letter and passed on to her own room, to relieve herself of gloves and hat.

The little lady's letter was short and characteristic:

"DARLING NONNE: Don't trouble about me. I've turned sister of charity and am having a splendid time. At present I have a new pet to take care of. It is a sick Frenchman, that I found in the woods, and Dan came very near killing him (make him tell you all about it); so we are in duty bound to see him through (Max is going to call that slang, but I am writing in a hurry and nothing else fits). Cousin Paul, to whom he came addressed, has been here to see him, and will take him over to the lodge as soon as he can be moved. But in the meantime, mother Danbury and Lucy Samuels (she is an angel, make Dan tell you all about her) have been helping me to nurse him. His being here has made the old place really lively. As soon as Paul takes him home I will make Dan bring him back to Wickam. Kiss dearest Evelyn and Max for me.

"P. S.—Mother Danbury has just told me that she intended also to write by Alexander. I know from the way her mouth looked when she said 'Alexander,' that she is going to write something awful about me. But as

she is a Christian, I suppose I am safe from slander at her pen."

Next Eleanor read the Christian's message.

"Miss Morgan:

"RESPECTED LADY: I would not feel satisfied that I'd done my duty to you or to the fiddy child down stairs, if I did not send you a plain statement of the goings on in this old house. Miss Delphine and my son Alexander, who is not a bit less of a simpleton than the first named, found a sick man in the woods and brought him home, and had him put into the best bed in the house, linen sheets and all (although, as a consistent follower of the gentle Jesus, I should not a' let him suffer), without stopping to inquire whether they was bringing small-pox or what into the house. Since he's been here the expense he's put us to in the way of extras is terrible to calculate (though, as a Christian woman I hope I will never begrudge my mite to a fellow sufferer). He gives more trouble than a dozen babies, and thinks no more of breaking my rest than if I had been his own born mother (though I m not unmindful of His command to do good to all).

"I cannot think it right the way these two young men cousins make free of the house. They come and they go just as they please, and a merrier four than them and the two girls would be hard to find (not that I mean to be so unchristianlike as to insinuate they ever forgets they are ladies and gentlemen).

"If the above meets with your approval it is all one to me. But I've only obeyed the golden rule by letting you know; though, in my young days, young girls weren't allowed quite such a long tether.

"Considering I've done my duty as a Christian woman, yours with esteem,

"SELINA DANBURY."

So much more important was the matter on hand, and so complete was Eleanor's confidence in the object of all this solicitude, that she rejoiced over the sick Frenchman as a most opportune detention.

Throwing the letter into her desk, she returned to the sitting room, and, for the second time that day, told the story of the Frenchwoman and her claim, this time to a most sympathetic hearer.

"Good God! who'd have thought it?"

"You knew, then, that Delphine's mother was not dead?"

"Yes, ma'am; I knew where and how we left her."

"Did you ever see Mrs. Staunton?"

"Once only."

"Once only?" I thought you had been with Colonel Staunton so long."

"So I had been for some time before he married. But it so happened that just about the time he got marryin' in his head, I was called away from him, to travel about a little with a sick sister, whose life was precious enough for us to spend our all in trying to save it. I was away from him during all the happy part of his married life. When I came back he was away, tryin' to cure her of her grief about her father. He came back with a crazy wife. It was when the doctors said she must be took to the asylum, that I saw her for the first time. The Colonel came to me, looking so miserable and tired-out like, and told me a carriage would be there about dusk (you see he didn't want every cursed fool in the streets to be starin'), and some strong person must go with him in the carriage, as she was violent at times. I went with him to the poor lady's room. He took one hand in his arm and I took one under mine. That was the only time I ever saw her. She went with us like a lamb, poor little woman."

"Do you think you would know her again if you saw her?"

"I think I should."

"Describe her, please, Sergeant."

Sergeant Danbury described the Frenchwoman.

"But then so many Frenchwomen are small, have large dark eyes and dark hair."

"Very true. But if it's not her, Miss Morgan, who in God's name can it be? Who else is there could come over here, knowing everything about the Colonel, bringing a letter from M. Brousseau, but her? And we had no right to think she never would get well. The little lady was seven years old when her father died, and, according to her story, she's been well now over a year. I suppose plenty of people have been that long in the asylum, and come out right, at last. There's not much that time can't accomplish, and, in the long run, who knows but what it may be for the little lady's happiness?"

"Not such a mother, Sergeant."

"I never knew her. But I did know the master. He would never have married anything but a lady."

"There is a coarseness about the woman, a lack of a lady's composure, that puzzles me."

"Her trouble, I expect, would cause that."

"Perhaps. You think you could tell her again?"

"I do."

"She will be here, this evening. You must stay. I want you to examine her face well without being seen by her."

"With all my heart. But there's one little test that would make me believe in her quicker than her looks, which may—which must—have changed very much."

"And that test?"

"I used to hear her sing a little song called 'Pensez à Moi,' in her crazy moods. If by any way that song could be placed before her, and I could hear hear her voice while she was singing it, I believe I could swear to her."

"You shall hear it. The song is in my own books. I will leave it open upon the music rack. If it attracts her attention and she sings it I will be convinced."

With anxious hearts the Morgans looked forward to the return of the Frenchwoman and to the result of Sergeant Danbury's test.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER WITNESS FOR CLAIMANT.

"How would you be
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are?"

—Shakespeare.

With early lamp-light came the stranger. Miss Morgan received her with chilling politeness, and conducted her to an arm-chair in the full blaze of the lamp. The sitting room door connecting with the drawing room was purposely left open and the apartment unlighted. In obscurity himself, Sergeant Danbury was thus at liberty to scan the stranger's features, deliberately and thoroughly.

Neither Max nor Evelyn were visible. They preferred it so. Miss Morgan was to leave the room as soon as the test song had been sung, to receive Sergeant Danbury's testimony.

What a mockery it would seem, this commonplace society formula, asking for a song! A song when her own soul was on the rack! Would the woman even comply with a request, which, if she were possessed of the minimum of sensibility, must strike her as singularly out of place. Eleanor did not know. The whole thing was a game of hazard.

Scarce breathing audibly, his big fig-

ure drawn back against the cushions of the chair in a most comfortless position, Sergeant Danbury entered upon his novel rôle of detective.

The mincing, cat-like tread with which the stranger entered the room was totally unlike the gliding motion of the poor lady who had leaned on his arm, when they were taking her away from her home and her baby. But then, he had always heard those poor creatures in the asylum learned to be so cunning and stealthy; there's where she got that cat-like tread. Her face was older, too, to be sure it was; nine more years of trouble had left care-worn furrows about the brow; and harder it did seem—but had not the poor woman gone through with enough to harden soul and face, too? Her eyes! Those big, shining eyes! Surely those were the very same eyes that had looked at him so pitifully, like some dumb, stricken thing, when he was helping to take her away. He had said those eyes would haunt him into the grave, and here they were, stabbing him again, as it were. Calling on him now, as they had seemed to do then, to help her. Then he could do nothing for her; but now could he not befriend her by helping to prove she was what she said she was? He could and he would. The longer he looked into those big eyes, the surer he felt that the Colonel's crazy wife was before him. Poor lady; how sad her face looked. And what made them treat her with so much cruel suspicion? How it must madden her, all this unnecessary delay when she'd come so far, burning to see her child, the baby she'd been taken from such weary years ago. Sergeant Danbury felt his heart going out in one great burst of sympathetic pity toward this forlorn stranger in a land of unbelieving strangers. Poor lady! Had she not seen enough trouble that could not be helped without having so much more piled upon her that could be helped? Why was not Mons. Brousseau's letter of introduction enough to convince them? For the life of him, he could not see why they found her so hard to believe in, with that letter, and the master's letter and his telling them she was alive, to back her claim. If it was not Delphine's mother, who should it be? No one.

All these thoughts went rushing through the old soldier's brain, and he had made up his verdict in favor of plain-

tiff in the short while that it took Miss Morgan to tell the stranger that they had instituted certain inquiries, which must be satisfactorily answered before Delphine could be allowed to return to Wickam.

A flush—of mortified pride, thought the Sergeant; of fear, thought Miss Morgan—dyed the Frenchwoman's face a purplish crimson.

"You have written to M. Brousseau?"

"I have."

"You have asked him to write directly to you, concerning me?"

"I have."

"I am glad. It is painful, though. You American people must meet with much deception to make you so unbelieving."

"Perhaps so; but, as I told you in our last interview, there is much at stake in this matter."

"It is probable you have asked him for a photograph. I believe that is the usual course when one wishes to detect an impostor."

"You guess well."

"He will not be able to send you one. The only picture of me existing is in a double case, which should be in Delphine's possession. It is of her father and myself, taken soon after our marriage. Mine must necessarily be but a poor picture of the woman before you. I am years older, and have gone through centuries of trouble since it was taken. The eyes, though, must convince you."

Miss Morgan looked at the woman arguing the question of her own identity so calmly, with a feeling of wonder at her coolness under such trying circumstances.

The foreigner was a skilled physiognomist.

"You are thinking that I am strangely calm?"

"I certainly was."

"It is the consciousness that my claim will soon be made clear which sustains me. Moreover, after a woman has gone through with what I have, it is easy to be patient for a little longer while."

As a decoy, Eleanor had hung a picture of Delphine, recently taken, just blushing into beautiful womanhood, over the open piano.

"You must have some natural curiosity to know what Delphine looks like. There is her painted photograph over the piano."

"Curiosity! Mon Dieu! what an icy word to use to a mother whom you are keeping on the torture by your hard-hearted suspicions. But I have vowed to keep calm. You will do me full justice soon. Curiosity! Yes. Ah! say desire—wild, burning, maddening desire to hold my own in my arms. My baby, all that is left of a happy home! Father, husband, joy, buried; but you are her guardian. You are guarding her well. Lady, give me the poor little satisfaction of seeing my darling's painted features."

Eleanor led her to the picture over the piano.

"Delphine! my baby! my beautiful! When will they let these poor arms clasp you?"

In a burst of maternal anguish the "poor arms" were upstretched in apostrophe to the beautiful face looking down upon her tears, mutely, coldly, nay even smilingly.

A sniffing and a furtive blowing of the nose came from the soft-hearted detective's dark corner.

Shining through big drops, the lustrous eyes dropped from the picture to the music rack.

"*Pensez à moi!* Who has done that?"

A Siddons might have envied the impassioned dignity of her gesture. A ghastly pallor overspread her face—her song! She gasped almost beneath her breath: "My father's song! My murdered father's song!"

Shivering, moaning, white, she dropped upon the piano stool, laying her wet cheek in the open sheet of music with a low cry.

Surely, thought Eleanor Morgan, if this be an actress, she is a very queen of tragedy.

Bitterly against her own will, she was convinced that it was Delphine's mother who was weeping there before her.

"Pardon"—and for the first time her voice sounded kindly in addressing the stranger—"I regret that you should have been so disturbed. You need a cordial. I will procure one. Excuse me for a moment."

Sergeant Danbury met her in the dining room, his eyes and face suggestive of incipient measles.

"Well?"

"I think there is no room for doubts, Miss Morgan."

"You could swear to this woman's identity?"

"No, ma'am, for that swearing to folks has done a deal of mischief in this world. Many an innocent soul has been sworn into eternity by folks being too certain. I can't swear to her, but I am as certain as a man can be of anything he aren't swearin' certain of, that the lady in yonder is the master's wife."

Mr. Morgan was in the dining room, waiting for their arrival.

He listened silently to all Eleanor had to tell, and to Sergeant Danbury's opinion.

"Well, brother; has the time come for acknowledging Mrs. Staunton?"

"No!" sharply and decisively. "So far, circumstantial evidence seems overpowering. I insist upon Brousseau's letter being waited for."

"Very well." Pouring out the cordial, Eleanor returned to the drawing room with it.

The stranger had spent the interval in overcoming her agitation.

"Pardon my excitement," she purred softly. "It is wrong for me to allow myself to be so overcome when I have been warned so carefully about giving way to agitation. I am calm again, quite calm. Tell me just what you will have me do."

"Wait!"

"Without seeing my child?" Her ready tears welled up once more.

Miss Morgan was silent; she hardly knew what to say. Madame, the victor, assisted her.

"Ah! I have it. Weeks must intervene before M. Brousseau's letter comes. You wish your ward perfected in French. You engage me as her instructress. You let me stay in your house in such capacity. I see my child daily. I hear her voice. I touch her sweet form. Say 'yes,' sweet lady; say 'yes.'"

Miss Morgan said "yes."

The next morning the modest trunk containing all her belongings was removed from the Wickam Hotel, and the cat-like stranger with the untrustworthy eyes was installed as Miss Morgan's ward's French governess.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER MEET.

"Blood connection is sweet, and is what nature brings about, but how much sweeter are the alliances of the soul! How much dearer and more intimate than even brotherly love are the bonds of truth."—*Engel.*

Sergeant Danbury had gone back to the country, solemnly pledged to silence.

"Preparation for such a calamity," Max had said very bitterly, "there could be none. When it became inevitable, she should hear all there was to tell; before it became inevitable she need hear nothing."

Now, Alexander Danbury—blessings on his transparent soul!—was scarcely more retentive than a mammoth sieve. Though all his simple life, all that he knew (with the notable exception of the master's sorrowful secret) had been allowed to percolate gently into publicity without a demur on his part. To form his own opinions of men and their doings was a mental exertion, he considered, altogether disproportioned to the result. Custom was the most excellent regulator of a man's views. But how could one be sure he was acting in conformity with custom, without an interchange of opinions on all subjects? Reticence, he considered a superfluous, if not a doubtful virtue. In the present instance, however, he had promised good Miss Morgan to be reticent, and let his promise be never so painful in the observance, reticent he would be.

Carrying home with him such a tremendous secret, watching the little lady flitting about the old house actively engaged in doing nothing, thinking all the while of the overwhelming surprise in store for her, quite overburdened the breast so unused to carrying matter of any weight or moment. The necessity for plugging himself up, as it were, to prevent this obtrusive secret from sifting through him, made him uncomfortable. He sought safety in absolute silence. If he talked at all, what guarantee had he that he would not drift round to that one forbidden subject? This enforced silence closely resembled moodiness.

"Pray God," was the inward aspiration of pious Mother Danbury, "that this new seriousness comes from the awakening of conscience." Whereupon, in a voice

cracked by time and, perhaps, never much celebrated for sweetness, she crooned, as she strung her red-peppers, "Sinner, turn; why will you die?"

Delphine did not take such a soul-comforting view of this new phase of manner in her heretofore ever-smiling vassal. She revelled in sunshine and hated clouds, sunshiny days and sunshiny people were her inspiration. Paul Weyland was sunshiny and she loved him. Dan always had been, and he, too, was very near to her affections. She could brook no shadow of change in those few she loved.

"Dan," said this small queen, in her authoritative fashion, "You must take me back to Wickam, tomorrow."

"Tomorrow, little lady!"

"Tomorrow, big Dan."

"And for why?"

"Because I want to go. I want to see Nonee and Max and Evelyn. Besides, you've grown disagreeable since you came back from Wickam. Blucher is a smiling cherub by contrast. I stop liking people when they forget how to laugh and jest."

Poor Dan! He blushed guiltily and heaved a deep-drawn sigh under the pressure of that secret. He was troubled in mind on a new score. Was it a right thing for him to do, to take the child back to Wickam, just then, before they were through with all their tiresome writing backwards and forwards? The right thing or the wrong thing, it was the only thing he could do if she had set her head on going. In the depths of his soul—a soul where romance slept but was not dead—he was glad.

"Blood's thicker'n water," he said to himself, "and once get them both under the same roof, and all King George's horses couldn't keep mother and daughter apart any longer."

In his ready sympathy for the tearful stranger, Sergeant Danbury was unconsciously fostering a resentful feeling toward Delphine's truest friends.

Just at twilight on the next day he deposited his precious charge inside Miss Morgan's gate—going away himself to find shelter for the night at the Wickam Hotel. After all his secret rejoicing he felt somewhat nervous about the *dénouement*, and preferred leaving the whole matter in the hands of fate and good Miss Morgan.

Almost running toward the house,

Delphine came suddenly upon a female figure pacing to and fro upon the gravel walk running parallel with the verandah.

"Nonee! you dearest darling, say you're glad to have me back." Two warm arms clasped the figure and a shower of kisses rained upon the unre-sisting lips.

"At last! at last! Delphine! Sweet babe—"

Springing backward and peering curiously into the face upon which she had just lavished such testimonials of affection, Delphine spoke in a voice bubbling over with suppressed amusement:

"Excuse me, madame; I did not know we had visitors. Who have I greeted with such boisterous affection at first sight?"

"Ah! it was so sweet, dear child, you do not know."

"Delphine! Child!" A quick firm tread on the pebbly walk, a voice strangely vibrant with emotion and gladness, and Max was by her side, his privileged arm about her, and his kiss of welcome on her lips.

Drawing her hand within his arm, Max drew her toward the house away from this strance woman, whose glittering eyes were fastened on the pair with a queer look, compounded of hatred and longing, in them; hatred for this bold man, who still tried to keep her own from her; longing for the time to come when no one dare say a word where she and that beautiful girl were concerned.

"Who is that, Max?" Delphine nodded backward toward where the dark figure still stood motionless.

"A—wom—a lady Eleanor has here."

"She is queer, isn't she?"

"Queer! hum! queer? No. What is there queer about her? She is rather handsome than otherwise, some think. There, go in to Eleanor, she is in the wing room. I came out to smoke my cigar." He pushed her forward almost rudely and strode back toward the garden.

"They're all growing queer," thought Delphine, as she sped forward to embrace the two women who had been more than mother and more than sister to her forlorn childhood.

It was not that Eleanor's arms did not enfold her just as tightly as usual. It was not that her "dear child" was less tender or kind than it always was. It

was not that Evelyn's saintly face did not light up just as brightly as ever, at sight of her. What was it, then? There was a something new and strange and unpleasant about the home atmosphere; a something of which Delphine was painfully conscious, but too ignorant to define clearly. She felt it, and it reacted promptly, in the shape of a pouting protest.

"You are all so strange to me. What is the matter, Nonee? Are you angry? Angry because I staid so long, or is it about that poor sick man, that Mother Danbury was so excited over. I'm so glad you're not good people here. Good people are so tiresome and lose their tempers on such slight provocation. I've come home here thinking I was getting away from cross-grained saints and going to be so happy with amiable sinners, but you're all out of fix, somehow. I meet a horrid stranger in the garden, who puts her scrawny arms about me with such disgusting familiarity that I have to push her away from me; then Max comes, and I am so glad to see him; but in his turn he pushes me away from him, as if he was sorry I had come back. You and Evy look as sober as if somebody was dying in the house—and—and I don't understand a bit of it." The pouting red lips quivered in a threatening fashion over the last sentence.

"Look, child! If 'Max did push you away from him,' as you assert so resentfully, maybe it was to go for this." It was Max who spoke, standing over her with a gracefully-shaped vase in his hands, over whose curving rim drooped a profusion of her floral favorites.

He was looking down upon her clouded brow and pouting lips with such a full heart and, as Eleanor thought, with such tell-tale eyes.

"Then, after all, you are glad I have come home?"

"Home!" Max repeated the word involuntarily. What a stab to think that soon, maybe, this bright young thing, so beautiful and so dear, would have to go away with that black-eyed interloper to make a new home out of such poor material, leaving her old one, robbed and desolate. His soul rose rebelliously against this woman who had come back, it did seem, from the very grave, to smite to the dust all the brightness of the present and all the glorious promise of the future.

"Answer me, Max," thus imperiously he summoned from his reverie.

"Glad, child? You know I am glad. Take this vase to your own room. You will not find its fellow there. You know you and I repudiate matched vases or duplicated beauty in anything."

It was not until she found herself facing the stranger at the tea table, that Delphine had her first look at the features she had bestowed such rapturous kisses upon in the uncertain twilight.

It was with amused curiosity she scanned the face of this woman, who had come all the way across the seas to meddle with her placid lot in life.

"You must have thought an escaped lunatic had swooped down upon you, when I hugged you so convulsively," she said pleasantly, by way of relieving the awkward embarrassment (she thought) of Nonee's strange visitor.

The Frenchwoman started at the sudden address, and first flushed, then paled.

"No," she purred softly, quickly recovering her usual self-possession: "I thought a bright, quick, sweet, whole-souled girl had her arms about me. Ah! it was pleasant."

Then Delphine—dismissing the stranger from her thoughts, now that she had in a manner apologized for her own boisterousness—entered into a rattling account of her doings while in the country. M. Emile Girardeau, his discovery, his domestication, his recovery and his departure with Paul, constituting the body of her narrative.

Very earnestly were the stranger's eyes fastened upon the speaker's bright face; her interest in the girl's story seemed intense. Not a look, nor a word nor a gesture escaped her. Delphine was not unaware of this rigid surveillance, and it annoyed her.

More than once the brave, honest eyes of the young girl flashed a reproving glance into the restless ones of the stranger. At last her irritation found vent in the words:

"Why do you stare at me so? Do I resemble any one you know? You annoy me."

"You resemble some one I know, as she looked at your age. Pardon me; I will annoy you no longer."

Rising hastily from her place, the unrecognized mother passed from the room, her big eyes shining through unshed tears.

"Nonee, where did you find that disagreeable woman? I am sorry I hurt her feelings, but those strange eyes of hers quite took away my appetite. See, my muffin is cold and greasy, and you know I do love muffins. Sad, isn't it?"

It was by this skillful commingling of petulance with merry nonsense that this consummate queen of hearts generally warded off admonition.

"She comes from your mother's country and is of your mother's people. You must try to feel kindly toward her, Delphine."

Thus Miss Morgan, very gently, by way of laying the foundation upon which was to be reared (out of what?) the beautiful altar of filial devotion.

"Nonee, I never tried to feel anything in my life that the trial did not end in ignominious failure. My feelings, to be successes, must partake of the nature of spontaneous combustion. If there is any duty involved in liking your queer importation, I will promise to try; but I do not like her; in fact, I am afraid I dislike her."

"A girlish and unreasoning prejudice."

"Perhaps! Do you like her, Nonee? and you, Max? and you, Evy?"

What an inconvenient trick this child had of asking point-blank questions, especially inconvenient when no one had a point-blank answer ready for her.

"She knows all about your mother's girlhood."

"Then I shall like to talk to her. Maybe it was my mamma she meant, when she said she knew some one I resembled."

"Very probably."

"But then that was no good reason for staring my muffin cold in that ill-bred fashion."

"Do you not think those eyes which annoyed you so, are very handsome?"

"If, as Mother Danbury is so fond of reminding me, 'Handsome is as handsome does,' no. Prejudice aside—yes."

"She is rather handsome than otherwise."

"Nonee, she is not a lady."

"Another rash decision."

Max pushed his chair impatiently from the table. Where was the use, he thought, of Eleanor's trying to force this clear-sighted girl to see attractions and virtues where none existed? When the time came—as come it must, soon, if ever—for Delphine Staunton to acknowledge this woman as her mother, she would do

it dutifully and bravely; but neither her admiration or her love could ever be forced.

They had hoped—he and Eleanor—that M. Brousseau's answer to their letter of inquiry would come before Delphine's return to Wickam. It would have saved them the present course of double-dealing, and have simplified matters in all respects. They must get it to-morrow; and, when it came? For the first time in his life, Max felt fear—fear of the consequences to that proud, high-strung girl, when compelled to stoop to such a mother. fear of the consequences to himself, when this sunbeam should pass away to brighten another home; fear of the torturing task devolving upon himself of telling this hateful secret to the unsuspicious child. It was a cruel duty. His soul revolted at the performance of it.

With restless strides he paced the verandah, his hands clasped rigidly behind his back, until the sound of Delphine's masterly touch on the piano magnetized him into the drawing room.

He went and stood close by her, watching her fast flying fingers, thinking how white and pretty they looked, and how sweet the sounds he was hearing, maybe for the last time. He wanted to lay his hand on the shining hair and bless her; he wanted to lift up the sweet face, whose piquante profile was tempting him and tantalizing him, and tell its girlish owner how very very dear she had become to the strong man's soul, yearning over this child he had petted and cradled in his arms, until she had twined herself about the closest fibres of his nature.

He looked so calm and cold, standing there by her, naming piece after piece for her to play, that, though all the lookers on were women—natural born love detectives—not one (save Eleanor, who had been tracing the clear pure stream of her brother's devotion from the moment when it sprang into sudden crystalline existence, with a quiet gladness, until now, when it threatened to become a turbulent torrent of passion) spent one instant of conjecture about the two.

The evening, a strange but happy, a constrained, but tender sort of evening, wore away at last.

Delphine had bestowed her good-night caress on the three she loved best of all the world, and a courteous "Good even-

ing" on the stranger in passing her; then gone away to sleep as placidly and as care-free as on that far-away night when Sergeant Danbury had brought her slumbering into this home, where peace and love had attended her ever since.

Would it be productive of good or evil if we always knew when we had pressed the last kiss on beloved lips; when we had tasted the joy of joys for the last time; when the turning point in our lives had come to us; when good-fortune had said "Get thee gone," to ill-fortune; when the carelessly spoken good-bye was to be the final earthly farewell?

Ah! if we knew what wealth of tenderness would be compressed into that last kiss! what fullness of appreciation forced into that last taste of joy! What buoyancy of soul at the turning of the tide! What exultation of welcome to that rare visitant, good-fortune! What pathos in that last good-by!

But Delphine did not know; else that "Good-night," which was given with the carelessness of habitude, would have been elevated into a very nocturne.

CHAPTER XV.

DELPHINE LOSES FAITH.

"Standing with reluctant feet
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet."

—*Longfellow.*

The next morning, Delphine, fresh and rosy and delicious, from the knot of blue ribbon that held back the heavy braids of nut-brown hair to the last daintily fluted ruffle on her crisp muslin dress, was engaged about her initial duty of the day, loosening the earth around the roots of a splendid array of geraniums, which ornamented one end of the verandah. She was singing blithely. Her song was a sort of thanksgiving song for the bright glad morning, and the sweet home feeling that the geraniums helped to restore, and for joy-giving sensations which seemed to fill her whole being, this morning, without the desire or power on her part for analysis or classification.

A hand was laid caressingly upon her shoulder, while an unfamiliar voice purred a soft morning greeting into her ear.

The thanksgiving song terminated ab-

ruptly. Giving her pretty shoulders the slightest possible shake by way of ridiculing them of the obnoxious touch, she responds to the greeting without turning from her task.

"Oh! it is Madame, the stranger. Excuse me, but no one has given me any name to call you by yet. You are an early riser."

"No; 'Madame, the stranger,' is not an early riser from choice or practice. She was beguiled from her couch, this morning, by the sweet singing of a lark, and she bethought her it would be pleasant for once to arise early and get a glimpse of the pretty singer."

"Lark? We have no larks."

"*Fi donc!* What a matter-of-fact little creature it is, then!"

"Oh, you meant me. Excuse me, and I suppose I should add thanks."

"No; it is I who should give thanks. You sing sweetly. Your voice carries me back, oh! so far back into a happy past—a past gone forevermore."

"I believe everybody's past, happy or unhappy, is gone forevermore," says the prosaic lark.

An angry flush dyed the Frenchwoman's dark skin a shade darker. Said her eyes, "insolent minx!" said her lips, "what ready wit! The child fairly bubbles over with it."

Tired of being the target for such broad personalities, flattering although they were, Delphine gave the earth about Max's favorite apple geranium a decidedly vicious stab, left the fork quivering in the wound and turning upon the stranger, said in her usual right-at-it manner:

"Miss Morgan tells me you know all about my dead mother. I know no more about her than I do about the builders of the Egyptian pyramids. I should like to hear about her girlhood. Will you talk to me about her?"

"Yes, I will talk to you about her. But come, we will seat ourselves first in the garden, upon one of your friend, Mr. Max's, pretty green iron sofas, under your friend, Mr. Max's, sweet smelling jessamine boughs."

The desired location secured, she turned interlocutor:

"You would dislike much to leave this pretty home," she rather asserted than questioned.

"I shall never leave it," said the girl, stoutly.

"'Never!' What a great word for such a small mouth."

"I know its full value, though."

"The word's or the home's?"

"Both."

"But if someone who loved you came for you?"

"No one loves me more than they do in yonder," nodding confidently towards the house.

"That maybe so far, and yet it is not impossible that you might be summoned away from it all. Suppose the case, what would you do?"

"Refuse to obey the summons."

Oh the charming, insolent security of extreme youth!

"But you brought me here to talk about my mother's past, not my future."

"What would you know?"

"Everything that you can tell me; but, first of all, satisfy my curiosity on an outside subject. Miss Morgan tells me she has engaged you to perfect me in French. I want to like you, but I don't like riddles in any shape or form. Why did you stare at me so rudely last night? Why did you leave the room in tears? I could see no call for so much melo-drama. Is it because you are French that you are so intense about trifles?"

"It may be so."

"How exhausting that sort of thing must be to keep up all through one's life."

"But I brought you here to talk about your mother's past, not my present."

"You are right; let us confine ourselves to the text."

"And our firstly?" asked Madame, brightening under the appreciative smile flung at her in reward for her neatness in retort.

"Shall be, what she looked like when young."

"Like me, people said, when we were both young."

Delphine looked at her resentfully.

"You do not like me to say so."

"I did not say that. Go on, please."

"You have a picture of her, a picture set in a locket jewelled with rubies. Her picture is on one side, your father's on the other."

"I have. But how should you know that?"

"Have I not already told you that I knew all about your mother? We were intimate, I loved her as I loved myself.

I saw that picture when it was taken. She laughed and told me it was a good likeness of me. Look at that picture when you go to the house."

"Well! well!" exclaimed Delphine impatiently, "what matters a chance likeness? Tell me about her character, her life; was she a saint or a coquette? Every Frenchwoman has to be one or the other, does she not?"

"Child, let me warn you of a rock in your pathway upon which multitudes of brilliant young ladies shatter their reputations for wisdom. Do not allow your wit to degenerate into flippancy. The young fear that the world will not recognize their genius unless it be continually fired off in squibs before its unappreciating eyes, which squibs are noways more lasting or valuable than your noisy red fire-crackers."

Delphine was surprised into something very like respect. With all her lofty independence there was never a little child more ready to acknowledge herself in fault than was this brave girl.

"You are right. I was flippant. Now let us talk about mamma."

So the Frenchwoman wove her story, keeping the child who had never known a mother's care or love entranced with the description of that mother's charms and virtues, until her recital was interrupted by the sound of the breakfast bell.

Mr. Morgan was just hanging his hat on the rack as they entered by the front door.

"Been to town, already, Max?"

"Yes, I wanted my letters."

"And did the early bird meet with the promised reward of worms?"

"He did—one of a viperous order, perhaps."

"Viperous, Max? The atmosphere of this house grows thick with mystery!"

But Max did not accord his usually indulgent smile to her nonsense. His face was grave to sternness. It chilled the persiflage on her lips, and she walked by his side toward the breakfast room with grave decorum.

What a solemn affair that breakfast was! The viands were passed around with funereal gravity and partaken of as sparingly as if the hearse, which was to bear away from them all that was good or desirable in life, was even then awaiting their tardy coming. The stranger wore a half frightened look, and Delphine a wholly puzzled one.

The meal over, Miss Morgan obeyed her brother's mute invitation and followed him into his study.

"It has come!"

If the day of doom had put in a sudden and unwelcome appearance, Max Morgan could not have made the announcement with greater solemnity of face or voice.

"Have you read it?"

"No; it is addressed to you," He handed her the fateful letter.

She read it aloud, translating into English as she read:

"Your letter, my dear madam, has caused me some surprise, as I could not, nor yet can I, see occasion for your cruel suspicion of the unfortunate Madame Staunton. She went to you with a letter of introduction from me—the very letter which you return to me. I placed her in the good hands of a well-known family of your New York. The lady who delivered that letter to you is the mother of my ward. There is but one thing that puzzles me. It is the long time elapsed since she left this country.

"You ask for a picture of Madame Staunton. I can procure none. She has no relations in this part of the country; none, I believe in the world, excepting the cousin who was so devoted to her interests while an inmate of the asylum, and who, I learn upon inquiry, returned to her home in the rural districts when no longer needed.

"You make no mention of M. Gustavo Barrière, my own confidential clerk, who was to act as escort to Mme. Staunton, until she was under your roof, and then prosecute a tour through the States in my business interests. I have not heard from him since his departure, but cannot believe that he is playing me false.

"Mrs. Staunton is *petite*, dark, and has a most lustrous pair of dark eyes. She talks in the softest and gentlest of voices. More exact description I cannot give you, but hope that this letter will be sufficient to ensure this unfortunate lady the right to embrace the daughter, from whom she has been so long severed by a cruel dispensation of Providence;" etc., etc.

Brother and sister sat mute after reading this confirmation of the Frenchwoman's claim. Eleanor spoke first:

"Poor Max! and you loved this child."

"I love this child."

"You had formed your plans for the future."

"I had. Bright, golden plans they were, too.

"In the fullness of time, not while she was a coy, simple little girl, ignorant of the world and of other men, but when she had weighed them, subjected them to the crucible of that sharp clear judgment of hers, I would have asked her if she could receive me—old and commonplace as I should be by comparison with her—into the sacredest chamber of her heart, and let me call it mine, and I would have cherished her so. The earth should have yielded its riches and the heavens their blessings for her sweet sake. Ambition, with her for my inspiration, could never have soared too high; labor, with her comfort for its object, could never have grown too burdensome; life, with her to brighten it, would have known so little of shadow. But now—"

"Well—now?"

"That viper is to be her legal guardian. She has the right—a right she will not be slow to exercise—to take the darling of our hearts away from us, to do with her what she will. She hates me. Hates me for my obstinate distrust of her. I see it every time those black eyes rest on me. Delphine is still Delphine, the dearest object on earth. I would still cling to the hope of some day calling her my wife, but it would come to nought. She now owes a duty of nature's own imposing towards this mother, which would forever clash with my interests. I shall not droop under this unexpected turn of events, nor wear the willow; though this woman has levelled one of the brightest castles in the air ever reached by a man not skilled in aerial architecture. I shall never build another. You and Evy and I will go down to the grave as a mateless trio—a celibate, but not, therefore, a cynical family. As long as I live, Delphine Staunton will be an object of tenderest affection to me. But a marriage with her, involving domestication with this mother of hers, would not be the perfection of dual happiness I demand when I do marry. It would not satisfy me, and yet oh, my little one! how can I give you up?"

Eleanor Morgan's bairn had been very busy while Max was pouring out his heart for the first and last time, in a nearer approach to a lament than his strong nature approved. Max's happiness was very near to her heart, but so was his fame. It had been the dream of

her unselfish life (her one dream, in fact, since she and William Staunton had so marred their lives) to see this cherished brother at the head of his chosen profession. Long ago, she had begun to be aware that Delphine was twining herself very closely about Max's true, faithful heart, and (for she was a woman) she had built her own castle on the slender foundation of smiles and tender words and gentle caresses, until the stately pile had taken on form and substance, becoming a vivid and comely reality. And why should it not be? Where would the combination of truth, manliness and disinterestedness, which William Staunton aimed at securing for his child by concealing the fact of her heiress-ship, be found in greater perfection than in this kingly brother of hers?

But Max was not to know about the future, for he would scorn the idea of wooing this child he so loved if he knew her to be a wealthy young lady. But now everything was changed. This mother had changed it all. Max's fame was still, and must always be, her first object in life. She knew him better than he knew himself. He would try to reason himself into tolerance of the mother for sake of the daughter. He might win Delphine, but what then. As he had said, the duty she owed her mother, would forever clash with his interests. Discord in his home would clog his energies, clip the wings of his ambition and eventually make of him an embittered and disappointed man.

For a while, during the rosy days of the honeymoon, the bare possession of Delphine might fill his life, but the rosy hue of the dawn would quickly fade into the sober gray of every-day life, and honey soon cloy. What then? Regret, disappointment and the dreary process of making up one's mind to quiet endurance, as the highest good to be extracted from the situation. For his sake, for her own sake, Eleanor resolved to ward off this gloomy lot from the two she loved so well. Her mind once made up, no motives of mawkish sentimentality could deter her.

"Max," she began, breaking a silence which had lasted some minutes; "are you quite sure that you do not love Delphine well enough to marry her and risk her mother?"

"No, I do not believe I am quite sure."

"You are poor, yet, Max."

"Well, what of that? By the time she would be ready to marry, I should have plenty."

"But she would not need it."

"Not need it, with this added burden?"

"Delphine Staunton is an heiress, Max."

"A what?"

"An heiress."

Then Eleanor told the whole story, including her promise of secrecy.

"Why have you broken your promise of secrecy at this late day?"

"Because I have weighed my promise to the dead against my duty to the living and decided it was best to break it."

"What is your duty to the living?"

"To prevent a marriage between you two for both your sakes. I love you both too well to allow you to become man and wife."

"Delphine an heiress, and you aware of it; yet let me go on loving her, when you knew my scorn of fortune-hunters. Eleanor, was it well done?"

"I think it was. Is there any crime in loving a sweet girl because she is possessed of money? If you had married her, it would have been from the purest motives, and you would have made her happy; but now everything is changed. It would not be for her happiness nor for yours. I knew of no more effective means of deciding your mind than those I have used. Forgive me, Max, if I have added one atom to your trouble."

"Everything has, indeed, changed. Poor little Calamity. A calamity her coming has proven to me."

What a pity that people under strong excitement lose sight of the fact that walls not only have ears, but are terrible tale bearers!

The "poor little calamity" had gone rummaging at that most unfortunate of moments for the picture which was to disprove any likeness between the woman for whom she had conceived such an instinctive hatred, and the mother for whom she felt an equally instinctive affection, and the trunk which contained the picture was in a closet against the wall of Mr. Morgan's study. Through the chinks of that treacherous closet came the assertion in accents of bitter earnest:

"A calamity her coming has proven to me."

She knew it was herself, for the story

of Max's dread of the baby invader had been told her, and what a weapon she had made of it in merry revenge. But this time there was no jest in it. Something terrible had occurred; what it was she would know. The picture was forgotten. She rapped at the study door, hastily availing herself of permission to enter.

"Excuse me, please, for interrupting your interview. I won't stay long. I wanted to tell you that I was in the closet in the other room, looking for my ruby locket, and I overheard a remark made by Mr. Morgan"—poor little girl, how white she looked, and how stately that "Mr. Morgan" sounded, coming from her unpractised lips—"I am sorry I have proven such a calamity to you, Max. You've all been so good to me that I forgot I had no claim upon you. I want you to say 'good-bye.' I am going away. I won't stay another hour now I've found out you don't like me. Uncle Weyland will let me stay there till Dan can come for me. And, oh! to think all this time I thought you were good to me because you loved me—and you were just pitying me. I cannot bear to be pitied. I will not be pitied. Nonee, you ought to have said 'no,' when papa asked you to take his forlorn little child home with you. I do not blame your brother for reproaching you, when he says he asked you never to bring me here."

"Delphine!" Max sprang to his feet in a perfect agony of pity and mortification. He could not tell her why he had called her a calamity. How could he clear himself from the appearance of the basest hypocrisy?

"Don't talk, Max, please. It is so impossible for you to explain it away. I am sorry I heard it, especially in the mean fashion I did, but it was not my fault, it was the fault of the closet, and yours. Oh, Max, tell me that you did not say it. Tell me I heard wrong. Call me a silly girl. Anything, anything, to take away this aching pain at my heart. I've loved you all so dearly, and I thought I was loved in return."

At first her words had come in a tempestuous torrent; the last ones were uttered with almost a wail. The little head, so proudly erect at first, drooped like some storm-beaten flower, and great shining tears quenched the passionate fire in her eyes.

"Bring in—Mrs. Staunton," Max almost whispered to his sister. He wanted Eleanor away; he would have the child all to himself for one short moment. Could he right himself in that moment?

"Delphine! My darling!" Oh, what a plenitude of love and longing lay in each syllable of those few words!

The storm-beaten flower reared its head.

"You did not say it then, Max?"

Silence—dread, confirmatory silence.

"You did say it then! Speak, coward! What can I do? A poor, puny girl."

"Child, you rave. I command you to hear me."

"Reserve your commands for those who must obey them. I am not of the number."

"Delphine, dear little girl—how dear you do not know—"

"Maxwell Morgan stooping to hypocrisy!" The girl, her slender form drawn up to its fullest height, with the head now proudly erect, the eyes brightly flashing, stood for a second a beautiful embodiment of surprise and indignation, when without a word, as quick as a humming bird in its flight, she sprang through the low window at her back, and sped along the garden paths toward her own room like a hunted thing, leaving behind her a proud man bowed by chagrin, and a faithful heart as full of pain as her own. The petulant child of his love had gone out from his presence an indignant woman.

CHAPTER XVI.

ACCEPTING THE SITUATION.

"All nature is but art unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right."—*Pope.*

The "wickedest man in all Wickam" was seated in his big leathern office chair, a chair which had a trick of describing semi-circles when the corpulent little Judge was intent upon unravelling some legal knot, so tightly twisted that his mind must needs soar into entire oblivion of his body before success could be attained. But on this occasion the chair was not engaged professionally; it remained motionless, a sure indication that things were well with the Judge. So placid an expression beamed from his

keen gray eyes, so benevolent a smile played about his well-cut lips, that one could not but think wickedness had a very humanizing effect upon some folks. He was reading (the latest dicta of the scientists, it would be safe to guess), offering his bald head, the while, with the philanthropy of an optimist, as a skating-rink for adventurous flies, when a girlish voice, a not usual presence 'mid rows of musty law books, brought him back from the consideration of a caudate Adam to that of the prettiest possible result of evolution—a sweet young girl in a fresh muslin dress.

"Uncle Weyland!"

"Bless my soul, the niece!" A hand as white and plump as a woman's was held out in cordial greeting, for this man of brain and girl of soul were fast friends.

The Scientist was flung on the table to bide his time in patience, for which heroic act of self-denial, the niece kissed the hero and called him a good boy.

"Uncle Weyland, I am very unhappy."

"Unhappy! Bless us! Has our kitten been afflicted with dyspepsia or our canary got the colic?"

"Don't laugh, please. Things are very serious with me, just now, and you must not treat me as if I were the dyspeptic kitten or the colicky canary."

"But it is always best to laugh, little girl. Life would grow too serious else. It takes all the buffoonery and merriment that one half the world can manufacture to buoy up the serious half. The buffoons of this world are its unrecognized benefactors."

"Are you going to join their ranks as champion?" Severely.

"I might do worse, but *revenge*. I cannot believe that you have got beyond the laughing point already."

"Yes, I have, Uncle Weyland. I want you to give me shelter—I have no home."

"Poor little vagabond! Does it want a nickel, also, to buy a roll for its breakfast?"

Much surprised was the bantering Judge when a storm-gust of tears and sobs swept over the girlish face of the poor little vagabond, leaving it wet and sorrowful.

"Tut! is it serious enough for tears? Come then, I will be serious to know what is the trouble."

"Max hates me! Isn't that terrible! I heard him say so. I cannot live there

any longer. I want to stay with you and Aunt Catherine, until Dan can come for me, and then I will go and live in my own house with him and Mother Danbury. Then I will be out of every body's way."

"You say that you heard Maxwell Morgan say that he hated you!"

"No, sir, not in so many words, but what I had proven a calamity to him; and does not every one hate calamities? And I can't stay there any longer, Uncle Weyland."

"Of course not, of course not; you will go where you ought to have been all this while, and would have been but for some unaccountable notion of your poor father's. It was fear, I always believed that you and Paul if thrown together might have made a match, he prejudged the son from what he knew of the father; but Paul's not under discussion. Go on; why did you stop at the office; why not have gone straight to Aunt Catherine?"

"Because a talk with you always proves a tonic to me. You are my bit-
ters, I feel better already."

"So! Take care, you minx; but how about the French teacher?"

"I cannot endure her."

"Why not, miss? She is handsome, intelligent, polished."

"So is your silky-eared Murat, but I cannot endure him all the same."

"I am afraid the niece is too fastidious. What would you do, for instance, if you were closely connected with this lady? Why you would think her good looks divine beauty; her intelligence, genius; her polish, elegance. But come, I've catechized you long enough for one while. Go home to Aunt Catherine. Men will begin to straggle into my office pretty soon, and this is no place for you."

Hardly had the girl's farewell kiss grown cold on his lips when Mr. Morgan, grave and harassed, entered the office.

"Delphine has been here."

"Who denies it? But by what token do you assert it?"

"By the delicate odor of the violets that were pinned at her throat."

"Bless my soul! When your soul migrates it should be into the body of a pointer; what a good retriever you would make. The niece has been here, and in a pretty rage she is with you; broken hearts, shattered faith, misplaced confi-

dence and all the rest of it. You've been calling her pretty names, it seems—calamity and the like."

But the good-hearted little Judge was doomed to fail in all his efforts to laugh folks into a good humor with themselves and each other on that serious day. To him Max could have afforded to elucidate his apparent hypocrisy, but merely giving that handsome head of his an impatient shake he plunged straightway into weightier matters.

"M. Brousseau's answer has come."

"Well?"—quickly and seriously.

"He pronounces the shabby woman, with the mean face and the cowardly eyes, Mrs. William Staunton."

"The devil he does!"

"So there is no longer any excuse for keeping the knowledge from Delphine. I had proposed telling her myself, this morning, but she has left my house in wrath."

Judge Weyland was sober enough now. He had not known himself how much hope he had been entertaining that the woman would be proven an impostor. But he was not going to be a sign-post philosopher, stultifying himself at the first provocation, so he says briskly:

"Well, staring at each other like two ill-conditioned owls is not going to mend matters, nor alter the disagreeable fact of Mrs. Staunton's existence. I will tell the child all there is to tell when I go home to dinner, and you call round with the mother at six. She will be as ready for her then as she ever will be."

This arrangement made, Mr. Morgan left the Judge's office for his own, where he spent the morning cheerfully and profitably engaged in passing moral reflections upon the intermeddling propensities of fate, and wondering how and where all the present muddle would end.

The tale of woe sobbed out on Aunt Catharine's diamond breast-pin, Delphine had gone to the room assigned her, and was lying on the sofa, her aching head buried in the cushions, wondering if this crowded world held another such unhappy creature as herself, when through the keyhole Uncle Weyland piped a request for permission to enter.

It was accorded in a doleful "Come in."

He walked briskly up to the sofa, where she had cast her pretty, flounced muslin and her misery in one damp heap, drew her into a sitting position by his

side, and entered bravely upon the not easy task which chance had shifted from Mr. Morgan to himself.

"Delphine, my dear little niece, I have come here to tell you something that is going to astonish you first, then anger you, then rouse in you all the brave womanhood that little body may be possessed of."

It is needless to say such an exordium secured him the most instantaneous and absorbed attention.

"It is about Max?"—a glad light coming into her eyes.

"No, Max has nothing whatever to do it. It is about yourself."

"Myself! It is something stupid, then. You are going to scold. But go on: I can stand it."

"Certainly you can. There are very few things one cannot stand in this world if one would only call his head instead of his heart to his assistance. But let me get on. A little while back—while you were down at the place, in fact—a lady called on Miss Morgan and astonished her vastly by telling her that she was Mrs. William Staunton and that she wanted her daughter, Delphine Staunton. Come, don't quiver like a little frightened bird; listen bravely and act sensibly.

"Miss Morgan demanded proofs and an explanation. She gave them. First, in form of a letter of introduction from your guardian; then by showing her wedding ring and marriage certificate.

"Her story, corroborated by a letter of your father's, which he directed should be read only in the present contingency, is this: She lost her mind, temporarily, by the murder of her father. On her recovery she received news of the death of her husband, which threw her already weakened mind again off the balance, and she was consigned for a second and longer period to the asylum. Immediately on her recovery she came to find her child. We have declined telling you anything about this matter until we had satisfied ourselves. This morning a letter direct from M. Brousseau to Miss Morgan has settled all doubts. You have seen your mother, little girl, and you said you could not endure her. You will look at her differently now. She has seen much trouble. We will begin by treating her with respectful courtesy, and end, I hope, by loving her."

Short, concise, with no appeal to feel-

ings on anybody's part, had Judge Weyland purposely made his statement. He knew that the tragic element was in his story, and if he admitted the slightest touch of melo-drama into his recital, tears, hysterics, a scene, must be the inevitable result. He intentionally froze a sensational development into a matter-of-fact affair, to be taken into matter-of-fact consideration.

He reasoned in a stoical fashion about the absurdity of working oneself up into a perfect tempest of grief or joy or emotion of any sort over every ripple that stirred the glassy surface of life's monotonous current.

But Delphine had not reached the icy altitude of his philosophy. There was disgust, horror and consternation in the large eyes fastened almost imploringly on his face.

"That woman my mother! And I must go away wherever she sees fit to take me?"

"Go away? Bless me, no. The poor mother only asks to stay with you."

"But she owns me now. And I must obey her. And—and—oh! Uncle Weyland, the horrible sin of it—I hate her!"

"Hate her! Child, that little pure soul of yours does not know how to hate. You are prodigal of adjectives; that is the worst sin you have committed so far."

She did not answer: she was revolving this tremendous surprise in her mind. Queerly an element of comfort evolved itself from the chaotic thoughts. Yesterday this information would have produced unqualified misery; today she hated this woman, she was morally sure of that; but it took away a little of the forlorn feeling, so new, that she did not belong to any one. How her emotions contradicted each other! She belonged to this woman and owed her submissive obedience, and hated her for that obligation; she belonged to this woman, and they would go quietly down to the old place, away from Max, to whom she had proven a calamity, and live—"the world forgetting, by the world forgot."

The woes of sixteen are incurable save by utter and immediate renunciation of this hollow, hollow, hollow world! Yes, she would renounce the world. Her resolution was taken. Having a mother would materially enhance the respectability of this renunciation—thus mentally.

"She will take me from Nonee and Evelyn and"—thus hysterically.

"Max. Do not fear to add him. He is the best and truest sort of fellow."

An unsolicited and unaccountable kiss was suddenly pressed on the rough cheek of the speaker. Contact with the Judge's unshaven chin left the kisser wondrously pink about the brow and cheeks.

"Oh! Uncle Weyland, what must I do?"

"Behave like a sensible, brave girl."

"If she only did not look mean. Her eyes are cowardly."

"Your's are imaginative."

"But she will want to kiss me, and I feel as if a snake was coiling about me, if she does but lay her bony hand on my arm."

"Well, there are but two plans open to you. Let us examine both. Your mother has been unfortunate, she has been separated from her child through many years; she is restored and comes to that child, hoping to find in her society forgetfulness of a long series of troubles. Whether or not she shall do so rests altogether with you, her daughter. That daughter can receive her kindly, treat her respectfully, and give her liberal opportunity to win more than bare filial respect; or she can play the vixen, deny what all her friends have taken pains to have amply proven before allowing the poor woman one caress from the baby she nourished from her own bosom, and give a deal of trouble to all who love her."

"I shall not do that, Uncle Weyland. I shall be sensible and quiet. But, oh! oh! you've not made one bit of account of my being torn from the people and the home I have loved ever since I could love anything."

"I have taken it into account and I pity you for that more than for anything else. But that is one of the hard inevitables which are to test your bravery."

This putting the girl on her mettle, as it were, was a wise move on Judge Weyland's part. He had said just enough, he thought, and not caring to say too much he got up and went away, telling her of the arrangement made with Mr. Morgan.

He closed the door and hurried away. Cool as he was, philosophical as he wanted to be, the heart-wrung sobs that smote upon his ears through the closed

door penetrated to a soft place somewhere under his vest and melted him into very unphilosophic pity.

The Judge's lady was as much of a philosopher in her line as was her husband. She was opposed, in an æsthetic way, to worry of any sort. Care created crow's-feet; worry wrought wrinkles. So as long as the Judge and Paul kept in health, and Providence moved in a mysterious way which kept her well in pocket-money, all other ills were minor and endurable evils. She pitied the child—the woman was certainly altogether superfluous. She was inevitable, though, and they would all have to make the best of her. Dear me, what a stew it would throw poor Maria into. She must go up stairs and pet Niecy into a good humor before six o'clock.

Six o'clock came.

Somewhat nervously Judge Weyland received his punctual guests. He doubted much if his carefully instilled stoicism had not long since been washed away in floods of tears.

If heart beats could make themselves heard, what a tumult there would have been in the elegant parlors of Mrs. Judge Weyland while they were all waiting for Delphine. Her quick, light foot-fall was heard presently, a resolute touch turned the door-handle, and she stood upon the threshold. Her face was white to pallor, with dark, tell-tale rings about her eyes. For full a second she stood there motionless, gazing into the darkened room with startled eyes, catching her breath quickly as might a swimmer just about to plunge into unknown depths; then resolutely, that pretty head of hers held proudly erect, she came toward the group with the air of a young princess.

What would not Maxwell Morgan have given to have met that white-faced princess midway of the long room, to have folded his strong arms about the form that he knew was trembling in spite of its resolute bearing, and have snatched this bitter cup from his darling's lips. But this he could not do; so he just sat still, watching the girl with eyes full of admiration and a heart full of pitying love.

Straight up to the stranger she walked and held out her hand, saying in a voice sweet and clear, but not perfectly firm:

"I know all about it. You are my mother. Uncle Weyland has told me

your story. You have had a sad life—I will try to make the remainder of it brighter. Don't let us talk any about the past; please let us begin from today." Then bowing her proud head, she submitted dutifully to the rapturous kisses showered by her intense mother upon her eyes, her lips and her cheeks.

Suddenly the thin arms relaxed their fervid embrace, a gurgling sound, a gasp, and Mrs. Staunton fell gently back against the soft sofa cushions in a well-executed swoon.

"Is she dead?" shrieked Delphine, young and genuine, witnessing the first performance of the sort.

"She has swooned," said Aunt Catherine, coolly; "your mother is of a highly emotional nature and comes from an emotional people. Judge, will you call Maurice?"

With Maurice's assistance Judge Weyland bore the limp form up to his wife's bed-chamber, Aunt Catherine following and Delphine, promptly assuming the filial, rising to do the same.

"Stop, Delphine; there are enough to attend to her," and Max, laying his hand on her arm drew her to a seat on the sofa by him. In his wicked heart he felt grateful for the combination of weak nerves and strong emotion which had cleared the parlors of all but her and himself.

"You know, now, why I called you a calamity. If you had never come to us, we should never have had to give you up. Your going is our calamity. Oh, little one, how can we fill up the blank you are leaving; I had hoped we were all to be together for a life-time. It was a foolish hope, for we had no right to you. You were only given us in charge for a while—it seems such a little while. But in that while you've twined yourself so closely about our hearts that it is giving a terrible wrench to separate us. But I did not detain you here to talk of our feelings. As your guardians, Eleanor and I have talked with your mother. You are to live together at the old place. You will not be so far from me but that in case of need you can send for me. Promise me, child, that in such case you will always remember that I love you and will be happy in serving your interests. Promise that in any important move you may contemplate such as—marriage, for instance, you will allow those who have loved you and cared

for you ever since you were brought to them a little crying orphan, a voice in the matter."

But she could promise nothing, her arms were about his neck, and convulsive sobs shook her whole form.

Raising the wet face from his shoulder, Max pressed one lingering kiss upon the quivering lips, put her gently from him and left without waiting to bid anybody else good-by.

The Judge and the Judge's lady and the resuscitated Mrs Staunton returning to the parlor after a while, found no one there but a dismal-faced young lady trying very hard to look glad at having found something, when she was feeling very sad at having lost everything.

CHAPTER XVII.

HERESY IN HIGH PLACES.

"If this be treason, make the most of it!"
—Patrick Henry.

Mrs. St. John Ames sat sewing and thinking.

Sewing and thinking! A dual performance only possible to those who lived before the immortal Howe rescued woman's spine at the expense of her reflective powers.

In this age of iron, dreamland (like the nation's reserve for a worsted people) is being pushed farther and still farther out upon the confines of the possible, until it shall have reached the border of the impossible. For, with one's feet in vigorous play upon the iron treadles; one's hands engaged in the ceaseless effort to follow obediently where once one guided arbitrarily; one's eyes prisoners to the relentless necessity for watchfulness; brain whirling with the whirling wheel; nerves on tension concerning the tension; what time or space for imagination's play? Since sewing has been exalted (?) into the region of the mechanical arts reverie has fled the noisy arena. The iron needle has stitched fancy's shroud and reflection has sunk into the background to bide the moment of idleness.

I cannot but send a sigh after the dead hours, when women plied the slower moving needle noiselessly and drew the thread to and fro, weaving about it bright conceits, tender regrets, joyous fancies, as if it were the fateful thread of life instead of a frail filament bind-

mg together a perishable thing. I love to think of the volumes of unwritten needle lore stitched into garments the moth has fallen heir to by the generations of women gone or grown faded and old.

There is pathos in every fold of the christening robe, which a mother's tender hands have wrought into perfection. How her gentle soul went wandering into the dreamy future, as the thread went travelling in and out the cambric meshes, weaving bright fancies about the future, when her babe with the pink, aimless fists and the wonder-stretched eyes, was to stand a king among men!

There is pathos in the rosy pictures that the bride of the by-gone time stitched into the dainty fabrics that were to adorn the person made sacred in her eyes, since beautiful in his. Could these pictures, needle-woven like the Gobelin tapestries, take on shape and color, would they glisten with the bright hues of fruition or show faded as a musty shroud?

There is pathos in the dreams of conquest woven into every fold of her dainty wardrobe by the conqueror of sixteen, dreaming with down-dropt eyes and flushing cheeks of the conquests possible only to beauty adorned!

There was pathos in the pale face of the minister's wife as she drew her old-fashioned needle steadily in and out through the folds of cross-barred muslin, that was to eventuate in a new something for Susie. It seemed to her on that day as if life itself was hardly more than a vast web of cross-bars, in which the lines of duty were being forever cross-barred by the lines of desire, making the problem that had troubled her whole existence—what ought one to do—more difficult of solution than ever.

Mr. Ames had asked her a question that morning, had repeated one, rather, which he had been asking at irregular intervals since their firstborn had been fairly launched upon life's yeasty current:

"Maria, what shall we do with that boy?"

This was a stock question with the Rev. Mr. Ames, which it was safe to predict on days like the one under consideration. A dreary November day, when the rain came dashing against the rectory windows in a gusty sobbing fash-

ion, as if the very elements saw occasion to lament over that boy.

It was a cheerful habit of the grave minister's to improve the hours (which the inclemency of the weather prevented his devoting to a six-mile constitutional) during which he was forced into more immediate juxtaposition with his family, by compiling for the tender-hearted mother's benefit a profusion of irrefragable proofs that the darling of her heart was a ne'er-do-weel.

Poor Gus's latest sin was one of omission. He liked the place where Sunday and the Bible were tabooed so well that he still tarried there with Paul, still despatched promissory notes home, and still continued to dishonor the same.

This rainy day had been the most recently appointed one for his return, and his failure to do so had renewed in his father the ever-latent desire to know what he should do with that boy.

And though the minister's wife always looked sympathetic and tried with her weak woman's brain to solve the problem unsolvable by his strong man's brain, she always failed. In fact she did not see that they were called upon to do anything in particular with that boy, except to love him and to try to keep him in the way he should go—she binding him with the silken cord of pitying affection where the father would rivet the iron chains of duty.

The Rev. Mr. Ames was not the first father who, having clothed and fed a being for whose presence upon this troubled sphere he was responsible for twenty-one years, carried him through a moral and mental curriculum, governed all the independence out of him, frowned down every flicker of self-reliance, gazes with wonder at the bungling work of his own hands and asks with dissatisfaction, "What shall I do with him?"

The minister of Wickam Church, cold and gray as the stones of which that church was built, was as pure of heart and as spotless of life as the Master in whose name he uttered his fierce philippics against sin and the shadow of sin, embracing the broad field of peccadillo reaching out to the dark ground of schism and the unpardonable sin.

On the day upon which he donned the robes of office in his heart and almost in his life he renounced the world, the flesh and the devil. Too complete a renunciation for the good of those dea-

tined to his stern keeping, whose welfare demanded that, as pastor, he should guide them through the labyrinths of that world he held at such a scornful distance, should fight the fleshly fight side by side with them, and should intervene between them and the devil he professed to have put to flight the shield of his own immaculateness.

Conscientiously and faithfully had he fed his flock upon the best and ripest fruits of orthodoxy, watering them from the same fountain at which the patriarchs of old drank and grew strong, and yet here, from the very centre of the fold, peered out the disheartening spectacle of a black sheep, and he knew not what to do with him. An unregenerate sheep—and whose fault was it that the sheep was black and unregenerate?

To defy the elements, to leave his fire-side at the very time when ordinary folks would have hugged it closest, to plunge unhesitatingly through mud-holes at which the majority of bipeds would have stared stupidly, while devising means of circumventing them, seemed to exhilarate the Rev. St. John. Maybe it inspired him with a feeling of superiority over other folks, a feeling which has an exhilarating effect even upon gentlemen who have renounced the flesh and the devil. On this dreary day he was sure of finding Weyland housed and slippered; it was an excellent opportunity to have a talk with him about their two boys.

So he shouldered his umbrella as if it were a musket and he the chief of an attacking party, and plunged into the outer damp and discomfort, leaving Mrs. Ames to sew and think.

Her husband had startled her, that morning, into the novel position of actual antagonism to himself, not only in thought but in words. In consequence of which he had left the house in a frame of mind which, in a layman, would have been called "huffy."

He had suggested whitening the black sheep by putting him in authority over other sheep. In short, he had said, "Let us train him for the pulpit."

The mother bristling all over with a sense of the fitness of things, had said with wonderful courage and decision for her, "No."

Whereupon, with a few more tart remarks, the pastor had gone away from her to seek counsel where there was bet-

ter chance of getting it. And the mother had picked up the cross-barred muslin she was fashioning, and though at first through the salt tears the cross looked very plain and the bars very decided, as her needle moved mechanically to and fro, Augustus's future—crossed by his own turbulence and his father's harshness—seemed somehow to regulate itself or to be regulated by some unseen agency. So that by the time she was turning in the ravelled edge to form a neatly symmetrical hem, she found herself with a lightened heart gathering up all the jagged ends of her boy's mis-spent days and broken resolves; tucking the rough loose edges out of sight, folding deeper and deeper until she reached the firm basis of his good sense and noble impulses; and there she wove her bright tapestry picture of his reformation, transfiguring a mother's hope into a son's promise; building thereupon bright anticipations; anticipations as firm and as foundationless as a mother's love, for her ever-reforming, never-reformed boy. But that unseen agency by which Augustus was to be regenerated and whitened was not the pulpit.

Augustus in the ministry! Never with her consent. There were too many there now who had much better be elsewhere. She had seen so much of ministers since she had been a minister's wife that she was more than ever disposed to look upon it as a calling. Let him who felt a Divine inspiration to guide his stumbling blind fellow-creatures safely over the snares and pit-falls that beset their path-way, a yearning over the weak and erring, let him who had learned to feel another's woe enter upon the awful position of a brother's keeper.

She knew it was the fashion to say, "your minister is a man like yourself, of like passions and like temptations; You have no right to expect more of him than from another. But she did not think that was a true way of putting the matter. She thought that when a man came forward professedly ready to guide her, by perilous and unknown ways, into the far-away country she yearned to reach, she certainly had a right to demand that he should know the road better than herself, not that he should go stumbling along by her side, guessing at the road; she had a right to demand that he should spend a good-

ly portion of his time studying the map of that country, and making himself master of the route; she had a right to demand wakeful vigilance on his part, even though she, weak and wavering, slept the sleep of the sluggard; abstinence on his part, though she faltered and stretched out her inexperienced hand for the luscious fruit hanging temptingly over her head, sweet but deadly.

It was a dread an awful responsibility he took upon himself who assumed the guardianship of a fellow-creature's soul. A responsibility to be entered into with fear and trembling; an undertaking calling for all the strength, all the courage, all the exaltation of soul impossible in finite man. Should her son Augustus swell the already stupendous list of bunglers?

Then through a secret chamber of her soul, a chamber where reason sat in gentle judgment, there passed a ghostly array of the unfit, on through the council chamber out to execution by the Bridge of Sighs, thence into oblivion; for it was only to her own soul that Mrs. Ames dare acknowledge the possibility of unfitness in one of the anointed. Not in wrath, but in pitying tenderness did she pass her verdict of unworthy upon a sad majority.

She was too truly loyal and too thoroughly saturated with all the good advice which that saintly celibate Paul has expended for the security of other men's domestic peace, not to bow in orthodox reverence before the fitness of the Rev. St. John Ames. She could not doubt that he was fitted by reason of his great learning, his self-abnegation and his exalted superiority to every and any human weakness, for the stern office of guide.

How unlike him had been that slender, trim, little minister in the parish of St. Dennis, who had worn his gold-rimmed eye-glasses jauntily, had courted every girl of wealth persistently, and had such an inexhaustible stock of dubious stories to tell. She had always thought a good dancing-master had been spoiled to make a poor clergyman.

And that handsome Mr. Fletcher, tall and muscular, who was always most tenderly concerned about the welfare of the souls whose owners were known to keep good tables; a *bon vivant*, who said grace at the beginning of the meal with solemn

reverence and enlivened its progress with the spiciest gossip-sugaring malice, with pious deprecation. She wanted always to strip his robes from him, giving him in exchange for his surplice a colonel's epaulettes, placing him at the head of a mess-table, where his handsome face and dainty malice would be properly appreciated.

And the Rev. Larcher, coming straight down from a Puritan stock, endowed with the wisdom of a Solomon, the eloquence of a Demosthenes, swaying the people at his own burning will, bowed down to in worshipping reverence; an idol of clay, saying to his worshippers in clarion tones, 'Be thou perfect, even as thy Father in Heaven is perfect,' taking for his own model of perfection the sweet singer whose morality was of an order to have closed every decent modern door in his reverend face.

Was it any wonder that the ranks of the scoffer swelled daily and grew jubilant, when the temple was so defiled?

She had a systematic woman's dislike of seeing any good material spoiled in the working up. Hence her regret that the Rev. Juniper Jones should have marred a good craftsman to make a poor clergyman; he preached only a tolerable sermon, but his method of mending old cups was beyond criticism. How frightened and uncomfortable he looked if a theological point not explainable by the rubric was started in his presence, but give him a paint-pot and brush and he glowed with the fires of inspiration. If not able to throw much mental light upon Scriptural texts he had no compeer in illuminating them manually. What an acquisition he would have been to a first-class variety store!

She would not go on. Her task afforded her no pleasure. It sickened her to think of the army of slovens to whom the Master's work was entrusted. She knew that this analytical soliloquy of hers would lay her open to the charge of the blackest treason; that the cabalistic word Reverend, as well as the badge of the black-coat, were held to exalt their owner above the sphere of criticism, beyond the reach of condemnation. But so long as offences came, woe be to him by whom they came.

She loved her Church, she loved her God, and she loved the host of pure, earnest, Christ-like men, the good and faithful servants who rendered the Master

honest service. There was no treason in her heart, it was full of righteous indignation. It would be held a merit in him discovering a quack dispensing drugs fatal to the physical life to proclaim that quack in the street-corner, and on the house tops. What measures then, should be meted to him who killed the spiritual life?

But what could she do? Not much, perhaps, save prevent one more incapable from going into the Church to make a living. It might be an easier way of maintaining oneself than by manual labor, or a more respectable way than driving an honest trade of any sort; but if the searching test of fitness for the post was brought to bear upon every aspirant for pulpit service she believed that the ranks of the laborer would be swelled and many a pulpit left empty.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONTAINS ARGUMENTS WHICH CONVINCE NO ONE.

"For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."—*Luke*.

Arrived at the Judge's mansion, cold and rain-beaten, the Rev. Mr. Ames gave renewed evidence of his superiority to all carnal appetites by his lofty rejection of a glass of hot negus, hospitably pressed upon him by his sister-in-law, to drive out, as she said, the cold he must have absorbed during his walk.

"Thank you, Catharine, no," he said, with a "Get-thee-behind-me,-Satan," look; then went plunging into the subject on his mind, as he had just gone plunging into the mud-holes at the street crossings, with a sort of fierce disregard for others' feelings and his own boots.

"Wesley Weyland, do you know that you and I are charged with an awful responsibility?"

"Why, no! Bless my soul! Who's gone to perdition now under our pilotage?"

"I speak of our boys."

"Our boys! Oh, they are chronic. But as an auctioneer of lost souls, I am afraid you are not a success, Ames. To my certain knowledge those two boys of ours have been going, going, going on the road to ruin ever since they scared poor Miss Nancy Watkin's wig on end with their stuffed snake nonsense, and they are tolerably respectable members of society yet."

The soul auctioneer had long since discovered the utter inutility of trying to frown down the airy levity of this man of the world. So when discussing serious matters with him he wisely confined himself rigidly to the text of his discourse, trusting to Providence to see that some of the seed sown in this rocky soil might take root and bear good fruit.

"Do you never ask yourself what is to become of your son Paul?"

"Never. I never ask idle questions, especially when there is no prospect of having them satisfactorily answered. It is unlawyerlike, not to say stupid."

"With me it is a subject of profound and ever-recurring anxiety."

"I can vouch for the ever-recurring."

"And it astonishes me to see a man of your brain and culture treat it with such unpardonable levity."

"I beg your pardon, my dear St. John, but if a man of your brain and culture, with the superior lights on the subject which of course your profession furnishes, has been grappling with this awful question ever since your first-born was buttoned into his first trousers, with no satisfactory results, all the heavenly allies assisting you, too, what could I do, miserable, broken cistern that I am? But is there any fresh development of depravity on the part of our sons?"

"New, no. The old is bad enough. Idleness, aimlessness, thoughtlessness, two men drifting towards the shores eternal with no more thought for the welfare of their souls than if they were two cockle-shells."

"What an uncomfortably serious way you clergymen have of putting things. I should think such continuous and sombre reflection would really impair your digestive organs. Now Mrs. Weyland and I do sometimes wake up in the middle of the night and fall to talking about our boy. We think him a splendid fellow, of course. Upright, gentlemanly, the soul of honor, we don't apprehend any very calamitous fate for him, if he will only remain true to himself. We discuss his proclivities between ourselves. She says she would like to see him prominent as a public speaker, oratory—a little Demosthenes, you know—but I tell her he lacks two requisites for success as a public speaker—a deuced good opinion of himself and a correspondingly poor one of everybody else. I say I would like to see him an eminent jurist, but it

makes no difference what his choice is to be, talent accompanied by industry must command success. In fact we waste a good many minutes talking about that boy; but we never liken him unto a cockle-shell, nor do we impair our excellent appetites by unwholesome brooding over the shores eternal."

"But to what do you destine him?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing!"

"Absolutely nothing."

"Do you mean me to understand, Weyland, that because you have amassed a competence by your brain and industry, and his mother owns a little property in the country, Paul is to eat the bread of idleness all his days?"

"Bless my soul, what an inference! You asked me what I destined the boy for, and I answered 'nothing.' But I have too good an opinion of my son to fear his eating the bread of idleness, Paul is a man and a free agent. He has not yet fully made up his own mind. But I can wait. I think, Mr. Ames, that the majority of boys are ruined in this world by the intermeddling propensities of their parents."

"During the helpless years of his childhood, I took the best possible care of the boy, physically. When his mind began to develop I gave him every opportunity possible for its cultivation. As for his moral training, you would say he had none. I have instilled the principles of a gentleman into him, which principles involve honor and honesty, admiration for all that is admirable, contempt for all that is contemptible, *No-lesse oblige* is his creed and he acts up to it like a man."

"As a man he must take his place by my side in the arena of life, deciding upon his own course of action and abiding by that decision; I will not take upon myself the tremendous responsibility of shaping any man's course for him. The benefit of my experience and advice he shall always gladly receive—but no dictation."

"We will fight the fight out side by side as two men who love and esteem each other. He young and ardent, I old and calmed down. And it makes me proud to think that when the older arm grows powerless and feeble, there will be a lusty young contestant to prop it up, maybe. But I will not hamper him; I lay no stress upon what the boy owes

me. What he accords to me must be a voluntary offering, no sacrificial duty."

"The most remarkable position for a father to assume!"

"Perhaps! My position, then, according to you, has at least the merit of originality."

"A doubtful merit."

"I am only sorry for your son's sake that you and I cannot agree in this matter."

"I was regretting the position you have assumed entirely for your son's sake."

"Very well, we have disposed of my cockle-shell. Now, since we are settling things for two men without their voices or consent, what do you propose to make of your cockle?"

"I want him to enter the ministry,"

"The ministry. Has he expressed any desire in that direction?"

"None; nor in any other. Therefore it becomes my imperative duty to decide for him."

"Decide for him! It appears to me, good brother St. John, that the levity which you accuse me of bringing to bear upon the awful responsibility you say we are charged with is very neatly offset by the presumptuous way in which you handle it."

"Presumptuous!" Weyland, your choice of terms is both inexplicable and offensive."

"Inexplicable' I need not long remain; 'offensive' I never desire to be, St. John, as you must surely have learned in our many discussions, wherein, although almost invariably differing from you in your views of moral matters, I have endeavored to show the utmost consideration for your pet prejudices."

"Prejudices! Do you so denominate a man's religious opinions?"

"What better are your inherited ideas, your stock opinions, your musty creeds, but the accumulated prejudices of centuries? Has one atom been added to your code of morals, one single step been made to keep pace with the march of events, one fresh idea advanced, since the days of Moses?"

"The Church's code of morals, handed down pure and undiluted, as it has been, through a glorious succession of apostles, is perfect. Adding an atom would be 'To gild refined gold, to paint the lily.' One single step forward is not needed where Divine omniscience has placed

the Church upon a pinnacle of advancement and perfection to which the world, in its whizzing march of events, can never hope to attain. The perfect cannot be improved, the complete needs no addition."

"Your code of morals—perfect, probably, as far as it reaches—was formed in the infancy of the world. You complain of new phases of wickedness, new developments in crime daily. New diseases call for new remedies. What man of medicine would apply a last year's mustard plaster to this year's cramp? Your mouldy homilies are no more efficacious than last year's plasters; they lack vitality, pungency."

"You err. It is but the universal vitiation of morals which makes the pure, simple dicta of the Church unpalatable."

"No, St. John; this is undeniably an age of intellectual activity, the Renaissance of thought and enquiry. Science is not illiberal nor discourteous; she is simply unfeeling and does not entertain the traditional reverence for the cloth. She will give you a fair showing but no quarter. And unless the Church can shake off her drowsy conservatism and devise some means of keeping pace with the lusty young giant progress, she must resign herself to sink into the background, mildly content with a feeble constituency of women who prefer to do their thinking by proxy, and children too young to think at all."

"Your modest request that the Church should descend from her position of sublimed security to devise means for overtaking the lusty young genius of progress, would find a parallel if you, a judge, honored in your profession, secure in your position, should descend from your bench to settle a point in litigation by a foot-race with the litigant. Better for the Church and for the world if we could return to the days of pure morals and simple creeds, when the patriarch's word was the law to the family."

"Better perhaps for the patriarchs, but a little hard, don't you think, on the family."

"According to your novel ideas, perhaps." But it would simplify matters in my present extremity."

"To go back to the days of the patriarchs might reinforce your authority, but it would certainly not purify your son's morals."

"I am afraid I am in the befogged con-

dition you claim for the Church, for I fail to catch your meaning."

"I mean that if you or I should have chosen to get tipsy and play the rowdy, according to nineteenth century notions, we would be pronounced vindictive brutes if we cursed one of our boys eternally and condemned him to life-long servitude, for commenting upon our shortcomings, as did your venerable exemplar Noah. "I mean that, degenerate as these days are, there are not many men who would emulate Father Abraham's example, who cast his own flesh and blood out into the wilderness to perish, with the handsome provision of a loaf of bread and a bottle of water. "And, as rapidly as you think our two cockle-shells are going to the dogs, would either one of them be capable of deceiving a blind old man by tying goat-skins over his scampish fists, passing off kid for venison, and lying his way into a blessing intended for another man, as that high-toned gentleman, Jacob, did? As for the rest of that old-time lot, I think it doubtful if a single one of them would be admitted to membership in any modern club where a man has to prove himself a gentleman before he can come in."

"To argue these points successfully, Weyland, it is necessary that I should first ask you one question. Do you, as your utterances indicate, reject the Bible *in toto*?"

"I do. I regard the Old Testament as a record of evil-doing, a biography of immoral characters. By attaching it to the New Testament you Bible propagandists have done your cause incalculable harm. If I had a daughter, and the perusal of one involved the other, she should be prohibited from reading both."

"Then there is no argument possible between us. I take my stand on the Bible; I draw my conclusions from its pages. It was not to discuss the old, threadbare theological points that I came here today. The Bible has withstood the attacks of generations of pigmies before yours, without losing value or sacredness in eyes not so blinded by self-conceit as to be able to recognize it as an inspired volume. It was with the barren hope of being able to benefit your son Paul that I came over this morning."

"To be sure, to be sure. Bless my soul, we have wandered a long way off—all the way from Paul Weyland and Augustus Ames to Noah. But to return to the boys. Let me, on the principle of the devil quoting Scripture, advise you to take no thought of your boy's morrow; not upon theological grounds of want of faith, but upon the purely secular footing of its utter inutility. For rest assured that rough hew his ends as you may, there is a destiny that will shape them in spite of you, and I think, most like, that destiny will come in crinoline and high-heeled boots."

"A woman!" No love-disappointed anchorite could have thrown more alarm into two words.

"A woman! yes, and God bless the girls as the sweetest, purest, most omnipotent allies that fathers of sons can possibly have in keeping those sons pure and strong."

"This must be looked into. A foolish marriage would cap the trouble that boy has already given me. One last word in duty I must speak. Curb your boy, Weyland, else he and all your advanced theories will come to grief."

"Thank you, St. John; you mean well and I respect you, if I do not your opinions. But let me beg you to accept one presumptuous piece of advice; lengthen your boy's tether Ames; give him a freer range; or the day will come when he will think to have been a cockle-shell an improvement on his own condition, and will drift toward the shores eternal cursing rather than blessing those who presumed upon parental authority to cramp him into a machine."

The minister of Wickam Church went plodding homeward through the mud and rain in that depressed frame of mind which renders so sadly patent the vanity of all things here below.

Had he been preaching Christ and Him crucified for more than a quarter of a century to such small purpose that his pulpit should be pronounced a charnel house for dead ideas, and himself threatened with a feeble constituency of women and young children!

He longed for the gift of miracle-working, that he might convert the chill water of scepticism into the soul-warming wine of faith; that he might heal the leper of infidelity by one magic touch, calm the tempest of free thought by a

word, render harmless the viper of irreligion in the fervid fires of eloquence. But the days when Omnipotence chose to manifest itself in miraculous ways were gone by; passed away with the era of blind credulity—dead with the race of simple believers.

Fancy Wesley Weyland, a wedding-guest at Cana, critically eying the converted water and expressing himself with characteristic freedom respecting the mode of its conversion; or commenting satirically upon the doubtful kindness shown Simon in the miraculous cure of his fever-stricken mother-in-law; or discussing the bolts and bars of Peter's prison door, angel opened, with the coarse practicalness of a locksmith! The fancy was anachronistic, his longing was folly. There was but one thing to do. Fight the good fight out to the bitter end, on primitive Scriptural ground, without flinching, without repining. He would die in the harness he had buckled on with resolute hands on the day of his ordination.

Maybe that harness was old-fashioned and clumsy for these advanced times; it might be that his chain-mail armor was rusty and cumbersome and his grey head might bend wearily under the weight of his obsolete helmet. But the battle-axe of his father's was a powerful and trusty weapon, and with it he would continue to deal manful blows at the rampant spirit of infidelity until the arm that wielded it should be stiffened by death.

So the genius of conservatism passed in under the dripping cedars into the presence of his wife. And the wife—catching with the quick eye of affection the look of depression and soul-weariness on that stern face, so dear in spite of its sternness—rose quickly up, putting away her sadness with her cross-barred fabric, ceasing to think of her own heart burdens, ceasing to ponder over her boy's probable destiny; remembering only that St. John was sitting there before her, pale and dispirited, in need of that wifely ministration and womanly tendance which is balm and consolation to the stoniest heart that beats.

And I do not believe that even St. John Ames's heart was so stony that in that time of softening sadness he did not realize that she was more precious than rubies, and that all the things he could desire were not to be compared unto her

CHAPTER XIX.

DESTINY IN HIGH-HEELED BOOTS.

"A perfect woman, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort and command."

— Wordsworth.

While the Rev. St. John Ames was disquieting himself in vain over the possible future of his son and nephew, the two objects of that disquietude were finding the actual present so satisfying, that their thoughts seldom travelled far into the debatable land of the hereafter.

M. Emile Girardeau, with his perfect manners and his imperfect English, had imported into their days a flavor of novelty highly acceptable, in gratitude for which he was made to feel very welcome by his young host. What with hunting and boating and ten-pin rolling and good dinners and unexceptionable cigars, and no one to say to them "so far and no farther," the hours glided into days and the days into weeks, without either of them caring to decide upon the time which must put a period to this sort of *sans-souci* existence.

To do to them full justice, they did sometimes, between wine and cigars, discuss the future in a flippant masterful fashion, making no more of the traditional stumbling blocks on the road to fame than they did of airy globules chasing each other over the surface of their wine, flippant obstacles out of their way with as much ease as they flippant their cigar-ash into nothingness. The generations of men who had gone before them and succumbed to adverse fortune had been sponeys and nincompoops. But when they entered the arena they would change all that.

In the meanwhile they would gird their loins for the contest in cashmere dressing-gowns with silken linings, strengthen their souls with the best green-seal, clear their wits with the choicest Havanas, Paul allaying conscience when she threatened too sharp a prick, by declaring that it was high time he was having that solemn and fate-deciding talk with father, which was to be the initial step to business; Augustus despatching a fresh note, beginning: "Dear mother, I will certainly be home this coming week;" the Frenchman declaring every morning with fluctuating degrees of resolution that "this would never do. He was poor, he must to work; he had not cross the wide seas to

play at gentleman of leisure and drink champagne with two *bon camarades*. This great American country was kind, it beckoned to the poor of every clime, and promised them help. He had come for his share of her good things; he would have it."

Whereupon Paul, taking a sort of patron's supervision over the young foreigner crossing the sea invoiced to him, as it were, enquired into the style of occupation he sought.

Finding that a drawing and French class would fill the measure of his ambition, Paul suggested that the Rev. Mr. Samuels would be the person to assist them in this matter. Thus a series of visits to the parsonage had been inaugurated, during which the acquaintance begun at Delphine's house between the minister's pretty sister and the young men from the Lodge had been improved until, as might have been expected, three idle young men found themselves furiously in love with one sweet girl.

The epidemic manifested its presence characteristically in the case of each individual sufferer.

Paul turned his attention critically to the quantity of starch in his shirt bosom and the degree of polish attained by his boots. He whistled

"If ever I cease to love,"

in his clearest, gayest voice, as he stood before his glass in the morning, wondering if it would be an improvement to remove the parting of his hair just a little, not much, toward the middle of his head, rising superior to such afflictions as muddy coffee or belated dinners, dealing tenderly with the shortcomings of cooks and all other sinners, out of the fulness of his own content.

Mr. Ames's darkly handsome face took on a shade of tender melancholy, his bosom's woe seeking relief by scarfing the trees with hearts, fearfully and wonderfully made, stabbed by darts of doubtful proportions; piercing the flesh of cactus leaves to register his affection in a monogram wherein an attenuated L meandered helplessly about the supporting curves of a very fat S.

The Frenchman grew garrulous, vain-glorious and suspicious.

In the inmost recesses of his soul, each party was buoyed up by a hop so confident as to leave plenty of room for pity for the others.

Delphine's sojourn at the homestead had simplified matters for them. Her house affording a convenient camping ground for the attacking party, where they could call a halt, examine the varnish of their boots, convince themselves of the absolute perfection of their shirt fronts, and make the assurance of a faultless cravat-bow doubly sure, before making a sortie.

But Delphine had suddenly commanded her vassal Dan to take her back to Wickam, and for more than a week now no shadow of excuse had offered for the triumvirate to make another demonstration.

A week! Seven whole days without even a glimpse of the Lady Bank's rose that clambered about her window. Mortal men could stand no more. The eighth would reduce them all to a state of hopeless imbecility.

On the morning of that eighth, Paul brought matters to a crisis with a question; a question evolved apparently from a careful and deliberate investigation of the contents of an egg-shell, the cap of which he had struck skilfully off with his knife.

"Girardeau, was it not Tuesday the Rev. Mr. Samuels appointed for you to come over to meet some of the parties proposing to form your class?"

"Thursday," M. Girardeau said promptly.

"No, Tuesday; I am sure it was Tuesday, and your French ears converted it into Thursday."

"When all the time," said Augustus, grinning sardonically, "he said 'Friday,' which your American ears, queerly enough, have twisted into Tuesday."

"Friday! There is some mistake here."

"Several, I should say."

"It would be terrible for the people to be there, Tuesday, and Girardeau not there to meet them."

"Terrible!"—in concert from both his hearers.

"So to be on the safe side we had better ride over this morning."

His proposition found favor; he being willing to risk the error for the sake of a word with Lucy. The Frenchman willing to be driven over two days in advance of his appointment for the same sufficient reason, and Augustus sublimely indifferent to the ridiculous figure they would all cut—three men not

able to bear correctly in mind an appointed day—so that he might surreptitiously possess himself of a cutting from the rose bush that embowered her sacred window.

In palliation, not in extenuation of such mental obliquity, let it be recorded that Mr. Samuels had said, in that quiet low voice of his:—"Wednesday, then let it be, gentlemen"—just as his sister, bewildering from the topmost crinkle of her wavy yellow hair, to the toe of her small rosetted bronze slippers, had glided into the room, sipping three souls with ecstasy and emptying three heads of wits, at the first glance of her big, innocent blue eyes.

"There!" says Paul triumphantly, "I told you it was Tuesday!" Irrefragable proof that it was Tuesday, being furnished by a family carriage of aristocratic antiquity, drawn by a pair of sobered contemporaneous horses, standing quietly before the Parsonage gate.

The Lodge equipage dashed gallantly to the front, Paul putting his handsome bays upon their mettle, secretly hoping that Miss Samuels might accidentally be behind some of the curtains ready to admire his horse, his wagon and—the driver.

The two passed into the house, feeling relieved by the presence of the carriage, and delighted to find they had not committed the error of coming too soon. They were ushered into the family sitting-room where they found the minister's blind mother, her soft white hands folded patiently upon her lap, her placid face with its pathetic, sightless eyes turned in polite attention to an old lady of portly mien but defective hearing, who seemed to have fallen into the common error of believing every one else deaflier than herself.

Inch by inch, impelled by that hungry curiosity which we may suppose likely to haunt a woman shut out from the usual sources of information, she had hitched her chair closer, still closer to the blind lady's, until their knees were in confiding juxtaposition.

A little apart, where she could catch the best light for her work, but near enough to be eyes for her mother and ears for the minister, Lucy sat daintily employed in varnishing a brilliant collection of autumn leaves.

Their respectful salutations offered to the two elderly ladies, a dumb show of

introduction gotten through with between themselves and the deaf lady, the triumvirate clustered eagerly about Lucy's work-table, inspired with a sudden and intense interest in dead foliage.

Paul had just delivered himself of a compliment so delicate yet so patent, involving a neat comparison between yellow-haired girls and sere and yellow leaves, as to fill the souls of his companions with the despairing conviction that there was no use entering the lists against a fellow who could manufacture compliments as fast as a patent machine could turn out shingles, when the deaf old lady threw herself into the breach and turned the tide of war.

"Leland? Did Lucy call him Leland?" she shrieked into poor Mrs. Samuel's unresisting ear. "I mean that young fellow with the short crisp curls, that holds his head up as if he weren't ashamed to look a body in the face. Beg pardon; forgot describing him would not help you much. The first one that shook hands with you."

"Weyland," said the blind lady, availing herself of the first opportunity to slip in the reply; "his father is Judge Weyland of Wickam."

"Wickam; Judge Wickam? Never heard of him; thought I knew every man, woman and child within fifty miles, too. Who was his mother?"

Then Lucy came to the rescue. Marching Paul straight up to the deaf lady, she stooped until her rosy lips rested upon the withered ear—a sight which caused three stalwart young men to wish they were withered ears—and in a voice louder than Paul believed the gentle creature could command, she announced:

"Mr. Paul Weyland, Mrs. Robinson, his father is Judge Weyland of Wickam."

"And his mother," said Paul, boldly coming to the relief of Lucy's pink cheeks, "was Miss Catherine Staunton, born and raised in this neighborhood."

Lucy looked grateful, and the old lady looked pleased, and Paul was feeling in quite a Jack Hornerish frame of mind, hoping his Christmas pie would come to him in the shape of a good long talk with Lucy, when a yellow shrivelled hand was laid violently upon the skirt of his coat.

"Sit down, sit down by me, I want to talk to you," shrieks deaf Mrs. Robinson

in a voice that would have made the fortune of a news-boy or pop-corn vendor. With a sadly crest-fallen countenance, Paul brings up a chair, repaying the glances of malicious triumph which the Frenchman and Augustus fling at him *en passant*, with a comical look of rage and amusement. Performing a semi-circle with the silken robed knees, which in some occult fashion seemed to assist her hearing, until they bore directly upon her new victim, Mrs. Robinson spoke again:

"Staunton! eh! Staunton! I thought there was something familiar about your face. Why your mother's mother and I were like two sisters. Your mother was a beauty when she was a girl."

"I think her so yet," says Paul, proudly

"Got so fat? Louder, if you please, I am a little deaf in one ear."

"So I perceive, madam. You are much to be pitied."

"Small-pox pitted! dear me, dear me, and her skin was like satin."

(Paul, crescendo.) "You misunderstood me, madam; my mother is still considered the handsomest woman in all Wickam."

"Ah! now, that's right. You would learn to converse splendidly after a little while."

As Paul, in no way consoled by this flattering encomium upon his rapid improvement in yelling, lay back in his chair wiping from his forehead the clammy dew, superinduced by his violent and filial exertions to clear his mother from that small-pox imputation, the door opened to admit the minister, who had been made aware of their arrival by Mrs. Robinson's tumultuous discourse.

Paul hoped to find in him a deliverer. But he just shook hands with the two cousins, with a pleasant word for each, and then turned his attention to M. Girardeau.

"I am glad you have ridden over today, although Wednesday is the appointed day for most of the parties desiring your instruction to meet you here. But there is a lady in my study, the mother of two of your promised pupils, who has expressed a desire for a personal interview. Will you come with me?"

Of course he would. What else was there for him to do but to get up and follow the minister, leaving Augustus in full possession of the field.

Entering the adjoining room, he was introduced by the minister to his patroness, Mrs. Sheridan, bowing profoundly in recognition of his sense of the honor done him in the present interview, M. Emile retreated to the chair placed for him by the Rev. Mr. Samuels, with a refinement of malice, just where he could send his longing eyes straight into the corner, where Lucy sat, calmly and deftly handling her tiny varnish brush, while Augustus, the favorite of fortune, was staring at the pile of leaves on the table, suffering from the sickening consciousness that his stock of even passably sensible remarks was dwindling into the most shocking stupidity, leaving him bereft of all sense—the frantic desire to improve this shining hour.

"Augustus Ames, now or never!" thus encouragingly to himself.

"Quite a sudden change in the weather since yesterday," thus brilliantly to Miss Samuels.

"Yes; she always regretted these sudden changes on Mamma's account."

"Nothing venture, nothing win," valiantly for benefit of self: "He supposed so—yes, so sad," in imbecile response to Lucy.

Now Lucy Samuels was a sweet, brave girl, with a head full of sound common-sense, and a heart void of the slightest spice of coquetry.

Of the three young men who had been coming to the parsonage so frequently of late, she infinitely preferred Paul Weyland—merry, frank, intelligent—but this cousin of his, moody and melancholy, had appealed to her ready sympathy, and she always treated him with a sweet womanly cordiality that might readily enough be construed into encouragement by a lone-smitten wretch, reaching out eagerly for the slightest straw upon which to build his hopes.

Left to his own resources by the departure of Paul and Emile, his embarrassment increased with every effort he made to appear unembarrassed, seeing which, sweet Lucy Samuels felt sorry for him. Feeling which, brave Lucy Samuels, laying aside her autumn leaves and her varnish brush, said to him:

"Was it not Schubert's serenade you expressed yourself so anxious to hear once more?"

"It was."

"I think if you will come with me into the drawing-room, I can at last grati-

fy you. Your cousin sent it to me as soon as she returned to Wickam, and I am now ready to share in your enthusiasm."

Her face grew bright with the memory of the strains that had so thrilled her, her beautiful eyes invited him to follow her. Dizzy with the intoxicating sense of absolute encouragement, he rose up to follow her to the ends of the world, if she would only kindly lead him so far; and the two went deliberately out from before Paul's amazed vision, and M. Girardeau's wrathful gaze.

"And you see, Mr. Girardeau," the lady patroness was saying in that moment of anguish, "I never expected that my two sweet babes would ever have to struggle with a cold and unfeeling world. But, as dear Mr. Samuels so truly tells me, God works in most mysterious ways; and we never know what hard lot may be in store for us or ours. My beautiful darlings are half orphans, myself almost a pauper. It will be my girls' cruel lot to earn their livelihood by teaching others. This fact, you will please bear in mind, and make your instructions to them very thorough indeed. My dear Nannie is only seventeen, and her sweet sister Anne but two years older. Their poor father used to say they were both girls of remarkable intellect, but little did he then think they would ever be compelled to coin their intellects into filthy lucre."

This was neat, taking into consideration the fact that M. Girardeau himself occupied that painful position. Noting which, Mr. Samuels interpolated some flattering remark about the dignity and responsibility of the teacher's post. After which, it became absolutely necessary that M. Emile should respond in some fashion to one or both of them.

But what should he say? Of all that lengthy harangue, but one word had pierced the fog that veiled his senses. He was thinking of Lucy, and thinking of his own disappointment, and thinking of that lucky dog, Ames, and besides, people must talk English slowly, in order for him to comprehend them. He had learned much since he had been in this country, but not enough to keep up with such a comprehensive statement. The one word he did remember had astonished him:

"Babes! Madam, you say babes. What can I do wid your babes?"

Whereupon Mr. Samuels reduced the lady's flowing address to a concise statement in French, to which M. Girardeau lent his ears, but his soul was soaring aloft, on the delicious strains, which floated into them from the piano.

From Schubert's serenade to Schubert's personality; from Schubert's personality to the personality of other men; from a discussion of abstract, moral qualities to a discussion of those qualities in man most highly admired by Miss Samuels, Augustus found himself by a series of lingual leaps, made easier by the absence of all save her and him, floundering in the dangerous waters of controversy.

But he did so want to know what manner of man might hope to win this starry creature. If he could only hear from her own lips what qualities she considered most excellent in man, he would model himself on her words. Did she demand bravery he would be brave as Julius Cæsar. Learning!—He would outstudy the veriest book-worm of them all. Piety!—If he must, like Jacob of old, wrestle with the heavenly powers for a blessing, he would become a saint.

How adorable she looked, sitting there on the piano-stool, one white hand toying softly and idly with the ivory keys, her sweet face turned slightly away from him. What earthly struggle too great to gain the heaven of such companionship?

"Tell me," he said, made bold by the quivering passion surging through every fibre in his body, "what lack in man is in your eyes the unpardonable sin?"

"Lack of moral strength," she answered promptly, her fingers running a race with each other through a chromatic scale.

He violently caught her hand from the keys, holding it in a fierce grip. "Hold! Don't toy with those keys so idly, and answer me so carelessly, when every question I have asked you has been freighted with a soul's burning desire to know what manner of man may hope to clasp this dear hand in wedlock."

"That man," said Lucy, withdrawing her hand and rising to her feet majestically, "alone, who is lord of himself at all times and under all circumstances," her large eyes rested gravely calmly upon his excited face. She was too gentle to say more; she wondered if she had said enough. She felt thankful at that

trying moment to see Mrs. Sheridan and Mrs. Robinson standing on the threshold.

"Going, child? Going? Good-by!" the deaf visitor shrieked at her. So Lucy joined them hastily, and after that, Paul and M. Girardeau were making good the time they had been defrauded of, until they, too, must needs say good-by.

As they whirled out of sight, Paul cut as viciously at his pretty bays, as if he had his deaf persecutor herself under traces, and M. Girardeau lit a cigar and fell to smoking, moodily saying something unamiable between whiffs, about the "tam mudder of de sweet babes."

Augustus only was happy in his fool's paradise. She had played and sung to him, for him—alone. She had been gentle and pleasant and kind to him. She had sent him away in possession of the magic clue which was to guide him through the labyrinthine mazes of a woman's soul, until he enthroned himself within her heart. He must be strong; lord of himself, ere he could hope to be lord of this golden-haired queen.

Of all the pitiable objects poor humanity can furnish, it is a weak man with the ambition to be considered a strong one. Augustus Ames was fired with that ambition.

Will Love, mighty Love, potent for good as for evil; Love that can make or mar a man with one fiery breath; the lever to the noblest deeds, the wreckers of the brightest plans, the nurse of heroism, the murderer of souls, prove more potent to mould the malleable stuff of this poor mortal into a man of bone and sinew, than could a father's life-long watchfulness, a tender mother's tears of anguish, and years of patient prayer?

Perhaps!

CHAPTER XX.

MRS. WEYLAND TURNS MECHANIST.

"For still the world prevailed, and its dread laugh,
Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn."

—Thompson.

It is both a curious and a profitable subject for observation, the devices resorted to by the world of fashionables for circumventing a contretemps which threatens to prove overwhelmingly embarrassing.

The dread inquiry, "What will people say?" like certain powerful nostrums, produces effects as various as man's varying nature.

The human sensitive plant, as the first cold breath of slander blows upon it, folds its leaves about it in shivering haste, and with low-bowed head awaits the world's awful sentence. Here is the timidity of soul, which results in mental paralysis at the agonizing thought of "being talked about," a resigned folding of the hands, a cowering of the heart, while, with every tortured nerve on tension, *vox populi* is awaited.

Its antithesis is found in him whose boldness does not always spring from the pure consciousness of rectitude. It is a sort of moral "squaring-off" at the world—a brazen defiance of its dictum, which is, after all, but a swashbuckler's cloak, thrown over a trembling, timorous soul.

The unco'-righteous will generally bring to bear upon the always-to-be-deplored occasion for "talk" a reserve of pious resignation to the will of God (impatiently fastening the responsibility of every bit of slanderous gossip on an august Being), gliding around the contretemps in voiceless humility, with a "His-will-be-done" expression of countenance.

A few brave pure souls there are, who rest calmly satisfied with the approval of their God and their consciences, leaving all contretemps to explain themselves.

Yet again the social arena can boast its genius who, fully equal to fate's most spiteful flings, can seize a threatened embarrassment with ambidexterous hands, and by one brilliant coup-de-main shape it into a reflector of éclat.

To this class of genius Mrs. Judge Weyland undoubtedly belonged.

If she could have yielded to the truest and most active instincts of her nature, she would have told Delphine's unwelcome mother that she was altogether inconvenient and superfluous, that she had shown great lack of consideration for the Staunton pride in recovering her mind, and crossing the seas just to torment them all by her existence; would have boxed her up, and nailed the box-top down with her own jewelled white hands, and have re-shipped her to M. Brousseau, or the keeper of the lunatic asylum, without even the precautionary label of "This side up with care."

This plan being, however, not totally consistent with the requirements of civilized life, she abandoned it for a more feasible one, mounted her favorite hobby (which was, that you could convince

any one that the stars are made of tin-foil, if you would only work on them politely, persistently and politically), and rode it straight at the contretemps which threatened to set every Wickam tongue wagging, clearing it in true jockey style.

Early in the morning of the day succeeding the one which had witnessed Mrs. Staunton's acknowledgement and acceptance into the family, the Judge's lady left home in her carriage, leaving mother and daughter to cultivate a better knowledge of each other, in a whole morning's tête-à-tête, telling them not to look for her home to luncheon, she should probably be gone until three or four o'clock.

"To the Parsonage," was her first order, as she settled herself upon the cushions of her carriage, with a gentle silken rustle.

"My dear Catharine, what will we do? This miserable affair—so good of you to ride around. Poor Susie, how people will talk. She feels it so keenly—for weeks to come. What does Delphine say. There is something so disreputable about it all. Do you not think so, and the Judge too—" Mrs. Ames grew incoherent from excess of misery.

"As you say, Maria," said the Judge's lady, breezily. "People will talk—must talk, in fact. The only thing to do is to direct the stream of tattle, so it shall fertilize, instead of submerging our family tree."

Maria humbly confessed her inability to follow her more brilliant sister in this lofty flight of fancy.

"Why, I mean that I propose people shall talk this disagreeable family affair of ours into the most charmingly-romantic sensation of the day."

"You propose!" Why, Catharine dear, you talk as if you could actually make people think to suit you!"

"And so I can."

"My dear sister, are you not presumptuously assuming a Divine attribute?"

"Omnipotence? No, not just exactly that; but, you dear old dormouse, do you not know there is nothing in the world easier than to twist each individual opinion into an individual thread of a screw, until you have twisted public opinion, on the principle of an Archimedean screw, to the desired level? All the art consists in working up your threads while your material is in malle-

able condition, which accounts for my surprising activity this morning."

"Catharine, you are a wonderful woman," says the feeble sister, admiringly.

"Thanks! Well, Mrs. Simpson is to receive my first twist. I am going to return her almost-forgotten visit, this morning. And in the course of conversation, I shall tell her of the delightful addition to our little family circle of late—"

"Oh, dear Catharine, will that be quite true?" interrupts the minister's wife, who is afflicted with a conscience.

"Quite true," mocks the Judge's wife, who is not afflicted in that way. "No, not at all true. But I am not going on a crusade in the name of truth. And to be strictly truthful, one must prepare to run a muck at all creation, or get her 'to a nunnery!'"

"Go on," says Truth's champion, striking her colors.

"Well, where was I? Oh! then I will tell her the sad story of William's wife, who lost her mind when her father was murdered; and after getting her sympathy and interest excited to the highest notch, I will tell her that I shall certainly look for her soon, to call on the still handsome heroine of the story. I guarantee I will leave her quivering with impatience over the delay which etiquette demands before she returns my call."

"Then, who?"—with breathless interest.

"Then on to Mrs. Dr. Rogers, who you know is always the first to sniff a scandal afar off, and to say 'Ha! ha!' over it."

"Do not let us be uncharitable, Catharine dear, especially just now, when we are in so much need of charity ourselves."

"I know I will find her rolling this sweet morsel ecstatically under her tongue preparatory to its propagation all beslimed with her own venomous additions. And she is going to receive me with her *noli me tangere* look, as if she dreaded contamination from my new kid gloves—pretty are they not? Three buttons, and such a perfect shade of mauve."

"Lovely! How I wish my poor Susie could afford such."

"Well, of her—Mrs. Rogers, not poor Susie. I must form several threads to my screw. She is rather an unmanageable subject at best, and to convert her

anticipated tit-bit of scandal into an occasion for congratulation will require considerable skill and patience. I shall not dare leave her, before she has committed herself to one or two decided "how delightfuls," or "charmingly romantics!"

"My poor horses must pay the penalty for it all, but the Staunton name must not be left to be smirched by every miserable news-monger."

"But suppose you fail?"—anxiously.

"Fail!—scornfully. "Rest assured that my house, so long as William's wife remains there, will be the most attractive house in all Wickam, and Celestine herself be the rose that all are praising. Now, good-by. You and Susie go round this morning; never mind my absence. Archimedes must to work. I have my hands perfectly full with this French nuisance. I must stop at my dressmaker's and send her up to the house to redress the woman, who, in my estimation, is much more in need of redressing than her wrongs."

The result of Mrs. Weyland's masterly activity established her title to be considered a genius, beyond peradventure."

The gravel upon the Judge's well-kept carriage drive was ground into powder by the incessant clanking of wheels and pawing of horses. The butler seriously meditated demanding an increase of wages, as compensation for the arduousness of his task as door-opener. Mrs. Staunton was the rage, the fashion. It was so delightfully romantic, you know! And what a tender melancholy still brooded in her glorious eyes! Delphine, who had pronounced herself the most-to-be-pitied of all existing beings, found herself suddenly being congratulated on all sides, instead of condoled with—until she actually began to look upon her, self as a monster of unfilial harshness. She felt grateful to people for their good opinion, and wondered why she could not see the charms and excellences so patent to the world. She was blinded, she expected, by reason of the bitter loss this gain had entailed upon her. She hoped she would come after awhile to do this much-wronged mother justice. Innocent child, she predicated her mother's excellence upon the idea that people's good opinion of people must be based upon some merit in people.

Max alone remained cold and courte-

ous and distant. He had called more than once with his sister, had treated Mrs. Staunton with frigid deference; had talked to herself kindly and gravely, but had never once added an insincere tribute to the complimentary tide setting so suddenly toward the shabby-genteel stranger.

"Mother, will you not appoint a day for our home-going. I am tired of Wickam. I want to feel at home somewhere."

Delphine asked this of her mother, as they two had retired to their bed-room, after an exhausting day of receiving and returning calls.

Mrs. Staunton was unbraiding her long black braids in front of a cheval glass, which generously displayed to her gratified vision her form, wonderfully improved by Mrs. Judge's dressmaker; her train gracefully sweeping the carpet, and her whole self younger and handsomer by many years.

The white, severe face of the daughter, sitting listlessly on a sofa far removed from any glass, and the girlish smirk of satisfaction upon the maturer face of the mother, was in strange contrast.

"Tired of Wickam! You strange darling. Why, this existence is heavenly. Our room is superb, our fare perfect, our uncle and aunt charmingly kind to us, our good friends of good Wickam so cordial and full of pretty sayings—not a care, not a responsibility. Ah, heavenly! And yet, you queer angel, you long to go down to your musty old country-house; to your pigs, your cows, your fat old Sergeant. Where did we get all our domestic tastes from? Not from papa, cherished William; he was a gay cavalier. Nor from mamma; for, ah, my sweet one, I do adore luxury, I revel in this glorious idleness."

Madame leaves her glass reluctantly, and throwing herself gracefully down by the daughter, who is evidently criticizing her unamiably, her arms encircle the girlish waist coaxingly.

"So my sweet child pines for the rural districts?"

"We cannot live on Uncle and Aunt Weyland; and my musty old house is at least my own, and in that consists its superior attraction to this elegant abode."

"You say truly," sighs Madame; "we cannot live on Uncle and Aunt Weyland, kind and charming as they are. It is wrong for me to pine for luxuries that

can never be mine again. I say again, dear child, for mamma was lapped in luxury and cradled in ease until—ah, until—do not let us speak of it. I will go with you to your, to our home, whenever you wish. Now come kiss me; this has been a triumphant day, but mamma feels slightly wearied."

"Thank you; we will go down to the place, then, on Friday."

On the morning of that day, quite early, so early that she knew there would be no one astir in the dear old home but Miss Morgan, she stole quietly away from the side of her sleeping mother, and went to perform that saddest of all tasks, taking leave of those dearest to her of all the world.

She made her own way into the library where Eleanor always spent the freshest hours of her day in reading. Impulsively throwing her arms about the woman who had been so much more to her than this new mother could ever be, burying her head in the bosom that had been the receptacle of all her childish woes, Delphine yielded to a burst of unavailing but irrepressible sorrow.

"None! None! how can I give you and Evy and Max up forever and ever—and this precious home; no other place will ever be like home to me! Oh, it is too hard. I did not want a mother. I was happy without her! Oh, I know I am wicked, but I am so unhappy I cannot help being wicked."

Eleanor raised the wet face from her shoulder, and tenderly smoothing back the girl's rumpled hair, she spoke brave words of wise counsel to her:

"Child, this is sad for both of us; sadder, I expect, for me than it is for you, for you are young. For you there will spring into existence other hopes and other plans than those associated with Evy, Max and me. Gradually they will overlay the happy years we have spent together, until all connected with us and this home you now think so precious, will be but a pleasant memory. It is right and well that this should be so, else life would be one long wail for severed ties, for shattered hopes. But you are taking away from this house a light not likely to be shed upon our sober household from any other source. You are very very dear to us, Delphine, so dear, that for awhile our days will be too long, and our hours will seem drearily empty. But in this matter there is no question

of your preferences or our regrets. It is a matter of duty, so clear, so sharp and well-defined, that there is no room for vacillation, and repining will but rob us both of the strength to perform that duty bravely and cheerfully."

"But how can I help repining; a little you know, just a little, when I am called on without a moment's warning to leave all that I love; to go away from this dear, dear home; with a mother—but no, I will not say one word about her. It is cowardly and mean. A shadow of blame does not attach to her. Nor is it her fault that I cannot just yet accold her anything more than cold duty.

"Well-spoken," said a deep voice, just behind her chair; "and as for repining, you can help that, for you must feel it's worse than uselessness; you will help it when I tell you that it will make Eleanor and myself very unhappy."

The "child" just quietly slipped one hand back over the top of the chair, without turning her face toward Max. He held it for a little while in a warm, firm clasp, then said briskly:

"As for the home you love so well, I have potted a goodly proportion of it out, for you to take with you. Come with me."

Following him into the garden he led her up to a goodly array of boxes and pots, in which she recognized a host of her floral pets, fresh and vigorous for the journey ahead of them.

A pair of shining eyes are turned towards Max, and a grateful little hand nestles once more within his own:

"Dear Max, and I went away from you so angrily that day."

"Yes. You did wrong there. You should have trusted me in spite of your own ears. But that is all forgotten. Promise me never to doubt me again. That is all I ask in compensation for the sharp pain you inflicted then."

"Never," says Delphine, solemnly.

"And you will remember your promise to call on me, if you need a true and disinterested friend; and you will let me have a voice in any momentous decision you may be called on to make?"

"I will remember."

They wandered for more than an hour about the garden where he and she, the dignified lawyer and the light-hearted girl, had spent so many moments of pure

unalloyed happiness, Max talking a great deal more than was his wont; now giving dry practical floricultural directions for the treatment of the plants he had potted for her, now mapping out a course of reading for her, now impressing on her the advantage of bringing a brave, cheerful spirit to bear upon every inevitable ill in life, but never a word about himself or the keen pain her going caused him. Maybe he thought that any such word would form but a poor illustration of that brave, cheerful spirit of endurance he was recommending.

So the "little lady" went down to the old place to live.

It was not at all like the home-coming that Sergeant Danbury had so loved to picture to himself, when the little lady, a starry-eyed bride, was to descend from her grand carriage, leaning on the arm of a grand gentleman, her husband (and how grand he must be, to be worthy to be called her husband, Sergeant Danbury could hardly determine), and enter into her own, and then on the next day the grand gentleman was to receive the reward for his disinterested affection, by hearing of her unsuspected fortune. This, however, with various alterations and amendments and additions, had formed the old soldier's mental pabulum for so long, that now, with this sudden change in the programme, he was like some great ruminating animal, suddenly deprived of its cud.

But he could have cheerfully foregone his long-cherished romance if only the little lady would not go about it so white-faced and gentle and dignified, that it made his tender heart ache. If she would only fly out into one of the old-time "tantrums," when it did seem as if the combined powers of heaven and earth failed to please her, he could find it in him to thank her heartily.

If full measure pressed down and running over of gentle deference, respectful duty and filial submissiveness could satisfy the heart of a mother, coming from across the seas with that heart empty and yearning to be filled with the tender love of which she had been so long defrauded, Mrs. Staunton should have been over-well pleased with the perfect comportment of her new-found daughter.

"As mother wishes it" was the new

formula of Delphine's altered life. She was conscious that in her rebellious heart there still lurked a feeling of bitter resentment against this woman, who had interposed the powerful claims of nature against the truer claims of affection and gratitude, tearing her ruthlessly away from her soul's kindred. She was so conscious that in her was none of a daughter's proper affection, that she made up the deficiency in excess of frozen, dutiful deference, which was accepted with an airy philosophy on Madame's side, partly due to her nationality, and partially to a certain shallowness of nature which made it easier for her to acquiesce than to direct.

It was only when the girl hovered lovingly about the flowery mementoes of her old home that her face grew bright, and her eyes took on that deep, soul-full look which transported her from the realms of a dull, leaden-houred present, into a past redolent of peaceful days and tenderest affections.

About every shrub, every floweret, every evergreen, there clustered some sweet memory of words spoken, of ideas advanced or lofty thoughts engendered with a seeming lack of purpose, when she and Max had been tending the infancy of these now glorious flowers. Memories, which in spite of Nonee's prophecy that the day would come when new hopes and new plans would overlay that blessed time, must forever represent the freshest, truest, warmest feelings of which her nature was capable.

CHAPTER XXI.

A CRISIS IN THE AMES FAMILY.

"The words that a father speaks to his children in the privacy of home are not heard by the world, but, as in whispering galleries, they are clearly heard at the end and by posterity."—*Jean Paul Richter*.

A last visit from the Lodge to the Parsonage; a visit on which M. Emile Girardeau was transferred into the hands of the Rev. Mr. Samuels, by him to be transferred into the hands of the reduced widow, who had promised to board and lodge him for a modest consideration. A visit, during which Augustus chose to manufacture fresh food for hope, because Lucy, fearing she had been harsh with the sad-faced sensitive cousin of Paul's, had been even sweeter and more cordial than usual, allowing her hand to rest confidently in his while

she gave expression to some gentle regret about his departure. A visit, during which Paul manœuvred himself into a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Samuels, which left that young lady very pink about the cheeks, and himself as proud of visage as a young conqueror. Then good-bye and departure.

Lights in the Staunton house windows surprised and attracted them, for Delphine was certainly in Wickam and the Sergeant and his mother only occupied a wing. They turned aside to solve the mystery.

Delphine received them; then they must hear the wonderful romance and kiss the new aunt, adding their voices to the congratulatory ones poor Della so resented.

Before they leave, Paul finds an opportunity to whisper a great secret in his cousin's ears. He does it while Augustus is talking to the new aunt.

Delphine's two hands are clasped eagerly together in token of glad approval:

"Oh, I am so happy!" she says, mysteriously; then the cousins say good-bye, and the next day sees them en route for their long neglected homes.

Mrs. St. John Ames seated herself behind the breakfast-cups and saucers on the morning after her son's return, with a very red face, smoked eyes and shining finger-tips, also with a general suggestion of the kitchen stove about her fresh morning dress.

Augustus had come home too late the evening before to receive anything more than a chilling salutation from his father, and an ominous intimation that he should have something to say to him the next morning after breakfast. An intimation which had made the mother's heart quake, though strange to say, the son had said, "Yes, sir, whenever you please," with an alacrity that looked wonderfully like satisfaction.

Poor Mrs. Ames, she knew so well what an ordeal was in store for a victim to whom Mr. Ames had "something to say," and her boy had come home from his holiday looking so happy and handsome and bright (for him), that she dreaded for him the something to say, which was to wipe out all this new brightness and bring back that dogged look of sullen endurance which had caused her many a briny tear.

So, in the morning of the father's

threatened "say," the mother was up particularly early, revising and improving the morning's meal.

Flour puffs were substituted for corn-meal cakes, for Mr. Ames liked puffs particularly well, but they were too expensive to have often. The coffee she made herself, so it should lack neither strength nor clearness. The breakfast bacon too, she broiled in the coals with her own careful hands, getting a flame-colored visage and smoked eyes and grimy fingers over it, which, however, were but trifles light as air weighed against the importance of having the plain material at her command faultlessly prepared on a day so fraught with solemn import.

The minister's wife did not pretend to any theoretical knowledge of physiology—she was only acting from personal and very decided experience of some occult connection between gastronomy and psychology.

In fact, many a time when this gentle woman had sat in the Rector's pew on a Sunday, wincing under a spiritual pelt-ling which she was receiving along with the rest of the poor miserable sinners gathered together there to hear the Gospel of love, she had remembered with a pang of remorse that Mr. Ames's eggs had been boiled one minute too long that morning, and he had complained of the coffee. The cook had done what she ought not to have done (to the eggs) and left undone what she ought to have done (to the coffee), and there was no health in anybody.

But on this occasion nothing should be left undone to send the Rev. St. John into his library in as placid a frame of mind as could be ensured by a placidly content stomach.

The Rev. Mr. Ames would have scorned the imputation that he was coaxable in any way, manner or degree, most angrily, which would have been a *de facto* denial that he was a man. For, from the days when Adam ate that notorious apple and Samson laid his curly head lazily in Delilah's lap, down to the more recent morning which found Mrs. Ames smoking her eyes and singeing her fingers, by way of coaxing her husband through his digestive organs to deal leniently by her boy, one monotonous succession of men—susceptible, some through their hearts, some through their heads—yet others, through some grosser

channels, has gone plodding through the ages.

All the art consists in finding the vulnerable point. Once master of that, and you may throw your darts with triumphant success that Paris of Trojan memory achieved.

But *revenons à nos moutons*:

The father who had something to say, and the son who had something to hear, repaired to the minister's study as soon as breakfast was over.

Indicating his desire that his son should be seated by silently pushing a chair towards him, the Rev. St. John planted himself on the hearth-rug, strengthening his position by grasping both lappels of his faded dressing gown fiercely, and asked with peremptory abruptness:

"Do you know how old you are, Augustus?"

The question was propounded in such a catechetical manner, and sounded so very much as if it might be a companion question to—"Who gave you this name?"—that Augustus was viciously inclined to reply irrelevantly: "My sponsors in baptism, sir;" but he curbed the mischievous inclination, giving a reply prompt enough and exact enough to have been entered into the census-taker's book:

"Twenty-two years old, sir, on the fourteenth day of last August."

"And how have you spent those twenty-two precious years, Augustus?" solemnly.

"Variously, sir, The first decade in sleeping, squalling, coliking, teething, doing up the measles and other infantile inevitables; in learning how to walk, how to talk, how to say my A, B, C's, and how to get flogged for not learning them faster, and in other cheerful pursuits. The second decade, poorly enough, I am afraid. In learning a little of good but more of evil—in idleness, in repining, and in utter good-for-nothingness, father."

"An answer conceived in flippancy, terminating in a just acknowledgment. This state of affairs cannot continue much longer, Augustus."

"No longer, sir. I have come home fully determined to enter upon a new course of action. I have been a dullard and a sluggard, and am heartily ashamed of my past record. It is my most earnest desire to prove to you and to all I

love (here "Lucy Samuels," floated in golden capitals before his mental vision) that there is some good stuff in me."

"My satisfaction at hearing you express such sentiments is extreme. See to it, boy, that your words do not prove a mere frothy ebullition of momentary compunction for your recent undutiful conduct."

"Trust me, father! I think my good resolutions will carry me farther on the road towards achievement, if I am sustained by the comforting thought that somebody believes in me and trusts me, than they are likely to do if I start out battling against obstacles from without, doubts from within."

"Prove yourself worthy of my confidence before demanding it as your right. I shall be no niggard of it when you have fairly earned it. He is a poor paymaster who pays in advance."

Augustus drooped his head despondently. His love for Lucy Samuels had given rise to a fictitious sort of bravery which was not yet so firmly rooted as to bear all resistance unscathed. He loved her and was determined to win her. "Strength" was the watchword she had given him to carry with him into the bivouac of life. He needed strength right here, when determined to brave the iron will of his father more than he ever could elsewhere. If his father would only be kinder, and not make the home yoke so heavy to borne! But he must not fall back into the old groove of bitter repining. He thought of Lucy's sweet tender eyes, of the white soft hand he had held in his such a daring long time, and grew brave once more:

"Father have you formed any decided wishes on the subject of my further career?"

"I have, a very decided one."

"Well, sir."

"I desire that you shall be ready to start for the theological college under charge of the Right Rev. William Haywood, one week from today."

"Study for the ministry, father!"

"For the ministry."

"You wish me to go into the pulpit?"

"Into the pulpit. Nor is there any reason why you should repeat my words, with as much horror as if I had ordered you into the fiery furnace."

His son did not answer. He was girding his loins for the battle. He was

struggling to be lord of himself, lord of his words, lord of his destiny.

The minister was silent too, letting his keen eyes wander from the face of his first-born, to a corner of the ceiling, where they fastened upon a big black spider who was performing his duty in that sphere of life in which it had pleased God to place him, by carefully tightening the coil which an unfortunate fly struggled bravely to escape from. The clerical mind was far away in a hazy speculation upon the wonders of creation—the infinite wisdom and goodness of the Great Being who had so ordered the going of that fly as to lead him straight into the meshes woven by that industrious spider, when his son's voice brought him back to the lecturer's stand.

"Father!"

"Well?"

"I cannot do as you want me."

"Cannot!"

"Will not, then."

"You forget to whom you address your rebellious remarks."

"No, sir, I remember that I address them to a father who has been very patient with me, an idle dog, even though he has been very stern. A father to whom I owe much as a son; a father to whom I would say, as a man: Do not make the yoke of filial obedience too heavy to be borne."

Mr. Ames gazed at his son as he might at some altogether unfamiliar manner of man. There was a look about the boy's face which was unfamiliar. Not defiance, not disrespect: simply, calm, cool determination.

"This is the legitimate result of your association with the loosely-raised son of a free-thinker!"

"Paul, you mean! The bravest, manliest, most generous-hearted fellow that walks! Think what you please of me, father, but do not fasten on him the responsibility of what you are pleased to call my rebellion. I am a braver, bolder and stronger man than I was when I started on that visit; but Paul Weyland is not the sorcerer who has worked out my worldly salvation for me—" He checked himself. Not into that stony heart could he pour the story of the wondrous, sweet magician, who had held to his lips the wine of life, saying: "Drink and be strong."

He came suddenly back to the subject of the interview: "I have done a good

deal of thinking for myself, father, since I left home, and I have made up my mind."

"Indeed! and with what result?"

"I wish to enter upon an active business career. I want to shake off the sloth that has almost benumbed my faculties. I want to take my place among the real earnest workers of the world. I have been such a poor apology for a man, father, that I can hardly dare hold up my head and say I will do this thing; but I can say I want to do this thing, and I will try."

"Is this conglomerate of vague desires and vaguer resolutions all you can bring to bear against my well-defined wishes?"

"For a little while, yes, father. I ask you to be patient yet a little longer, and I will have something more decided to say as soon as I can look about me."

"You ask much, boy, in asking a further extension of patience. I have been over patient in listening to your childish twaddle. My own wishes remain unaltered."

"Father, do you think that I am a fit subject for God's awful ministry?"

"There are none fit; no, not one. The heart of every man, from the haughtiest bishop down to the skulking house-breaker, is full of wickedness and corruption. By prayer and fasting alone, may you hope to become half worthy, but with the solemn responsibility you take upon yourself as a priest of God, there will come to you an earnestness of desire to render yourself fitter for the post, which will prove with God's help, your salvation."

"Am I mistaken in thinking that in the Ordering of Priests a question is asked: 'Do you think in your heart that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Order and Ministry of Priesthood?'"

"You are not mistaken."

"And the answer is: 'I think it.'"

"You are right again."

"And furthermore, in that same Ordering: 'He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. Father, if I enter the ministry it will not be by the door of fitness, but through the window of expediency, thereby proclaiming myself a thief and a robber.'"

"I have parleyed longer now than my better judgment approves. Two weeks longer I will wait for you to decide

whether you will prepare to enter a theological seminary, as I desire, or whether, at the expiration of those same two weeks, you will take upon yourself the entire and unaided responsibility of your own future career and support."

"You need not wait those two weeks, father. I can give you my decision now. I will not,—"

"Hold, boy! White and stern and wrathful the minister stood before his son, one warning finger upheld, his grey hairs trembling with the nervous strain that shook the stern old man like some storm-strained oak: "Rash scatter-brain, if you have never known what it was to think before, go learn your lesson soon. If you have never known what it was to ponder well, go learn to do it now, for I tell you, boy, there is dire need for it here, such need, as may the God, you refuse to serve, in pity grant you may never know again. Go. I will not take your answer now."

Augustus had risen to his feet and stood facing his father, no less white, no less rigid, no less tremulous than the old man whom he was braving for the first time in a long life of almost child-like submission. His face was very sad but also very determined:

"Have you anything more for me to hear, father?"

"Nothing, but this warning. Heaven's curse upon disobedience is as strong, as fresh, as inevitable now, as it was when Eden was lost by man's weakness and woman's folly."

Then St. John Ames turned him abruptly away from his son; flung himself down to his desk, and seizing his pen, hurled himself into his next Sunday's sermon.

And Augustus Ames passing out from his father's presence with a slow, weary step, and face full of worry met his mother, who drew him down to her lower physical altitude to give him a comforting kiss.

"Well, my son?"

"It is not well, mother. Father is full of wrath against me. But I cannot, will not, enter the ministry."

Too loyal a wife to sustain a son in rebellion, too firmly of the boy's own thinking to chide him, Mrs. Ames just softly patted the hand which lay in hers, in a pitying fashion.

But Augustus knew he had an ally, and took heart of grace.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE NEW AUGUSTUS.

"Only some few in later as in early life affect the formation of our character; the multitude passes by like a distant army. One friend, one teacher, one beloved, one club, one dining-table, one work-table, one house, influence the individual, while the rest of the crowd passes him without leaving a trace behind."—*Richter*.

Still caressing her boy's hand in wordless sympathy Mrs. Ames led him toward her bed-room door, and pushing him in, she said a little hurriedly:

"Wait here, dear, and you and I will have a pleasant little chat presently. You must have so much to tell me about your long visit to the country."

"Not here, mother! Not to bring down father's wrath on your dear head. He will chide you for aiding and abetting his son in rebellion."

"Soul! son! do not speak harshly; do not ever allow yourself to think harshly of your father. Remember how much he has to try him; remember how much he had set his heart upon this thing; remember how he had loved to look forward to the time when he, old and feeble, would have a son's assistance in his parochial duties; think of his disappointment—and of nothing else."

She waited for no reply. But left him to ponder as he had never pondered before, while she, gentle peacemaker, went about the task which was to strengthen her title to be called a child of God.

She found her husband with contracted brow and low-bent head writing furiously. He had a stupendous task before him. Though one arose from the dead, he did not believe this wicked and perverse generation could be turned from the worship of the idol of the hour, science, the enemy of revealed religion; but he longed to hurl one mighty and convincing argument at this idol of clay, which should shatter it into pieces before the eyes of its idolators, and bare the crumbling clay of which it was made to their blinded eyes.

Commencing after the fashion of his learned ilk, away, away from any imaginable interest to his hearers, he was placing the dread battalion of "begats" in battle array, when a timid "Mr. Ames" sounded close behind him, and a hand, soft, if it was work-reddened, fell gently on his shoulder.

"Well, Maria?"

"Husband, you will not be angry with our dear boy, will you, because he does not incline to your wishes in this matter?" Remember how easy it is to start a young man at his time of life and with his temperament, upon the road to ruin. Oh, St. John, for the sake of our son, for the sake of your own future peace of mind, be gentle in this crisis; for a crisis I feel it to be—"

"Mrs Ames!" Medusa's eyes looked at the daring little woman from under her husband's shock of grey hair, and if she had been anything less than a mother pleading the cause of a son, she must have turned to stone there before him. "You will oblige me in future by confining yourself to the temporal cares of this household; its spiritual welfare is my own peculiar charge. You will please close the door when you retire."

Mrs. Ames retired and she closed the door when she did so. There was space enough between the study door and her own room-door for big tears to well up in her eyes; but there was, too, time enough for her to give her face one vigorous sweep with her handkerchief, so as to send her into her boy's presence with a face as gently cheerful as if her mission had proven a grand success.

With careful economy she replenished the coal fire, drew towards her the basket of mending, which, like Penelope's web "was never ending, still beginning," and said cheerily: "Now you can talk and I can listen. I can always listen so much better when my fingers are in motion."

"Mother, I have a great secret to tell you."

"A secret, my son!" There was more of apprehension than interest in the mother's voice.

"Yes, I have found a cure for the old weakness, mother. An object in life, mother, and a talisman against bitterness, gloom and despondency!"

"And that is—?"

"The love of a good, sweet girl—a girl nearer akin to the angels than to grovelling humanity, I have never felt like yielding to the old temptation since I have had the dread of unfitting myself for her presence, to deter me: I have never looked upon myself as a cumberer of the earth, since I have set myself the task of winning her: I have never felt the old bitter desire to curse God and die that used sometimes to sweep over

me in an irresistible flood of misery. Oh, mother, the bare hope of winning her for my wife has put such new life, such vaulting ambition, such buoyant hope into me, that I hardly know myself. I have had the duty of thankfulness to God flung at my head from the cradle up to manhood. I have been told that I ought to thank God for my manifold blessings, when I could discover no blessings. But now, mother, my heart is full of thankfulness. I thank Him for creating her; I thank Him for the ineffable sweetness he has dowered her with; I thank Him for my own being; for the health which will aid me in laboring for her; for the world's untold treasures, which I may struggle to obtain for her sweet sake. She is my religion, mother; and my religion is Love!"

"My son! my son! A wife!"

"There, now, you are frightened, and you see visions of your scatter-brain son, as father is so fond of calling me, falling in love with a pretty face and bringing a daughter of Heth into the godly atmosphere of this house to be a burden on father's cold charity, a thorn in your dear side."

"No, no, dear, not quite that"—the pale cheeks flushed consciously—"but you are so young, and you have no business habits yet, and you cannot know the young lady very well yet, and—"

"Don't multiply 'ands' on me, mother. Let me tell you who the lady is, and I will promise not to gush any more. The girl I love is Miss Lucy Samuels, sister to the Rev. Harris Samuels I have heard you speak of, as being one of the few 'truly called.'"

"My dear boy!" There was a whole volume of approval in that simple exclamation.

"Yes. And, mother, she comes as near perfection as a creature born in 'original sin,' as I suppose father would say she was, can come."

"Yes, dear, I believe that is the way all young men think and talk the first time they fall in love."

"The first time! Why, do you suppose a second time is possible with me?"

The wise little woman went straight on:

"But I feel satisfied that Miss Samuels' home influence must have been of an order calculated to make her a most desirable wife for any young man."

"'Desirable!' Mother, I never knew you to use such insipid language."

"But I am not in love, my son. You do not expect me to gush, too."

"No, to be sure. I just want you to listen. Why, mother, I've grown strong and brave and resolute, just through loving that girl. She seems to have roused all the man in me. I look back on my old opium-chewing, vision-seeing existence with horror, and towards her as towards the angel who has grasped my hand just as I was about to fall into a bottomless pit, and led me back by flowery paths into the straight and narrow road of safety. To win that girl a man must have the patience and pluck of old Jacob. But by that patriarch's beard I will win her."

"And is it all settled?"

"No."

"Nothing definite?"

"Not very. This is the way of it all. She knows that I love her, and she gave me to understand that when a man had proven himself a man, or, as she put it, was 'lord of himself at all times and under all circumstances,' he might talk to some effect. I am making a late start, mother; and I will flag often, I fear; and sometimes the old curse will tempt me sorely. I am weak in well-doing, mother. I will want some one to hold up my hands, as it were. Some one to cheer me on by saying, 'I believe in you.' Somebody's love to keep my soul from growing faint. The world is a broad field, and laborers of all sorts are in demand. Father need never fear a single pulpit being empty because I shall never fill one. But I want work, mother. Actual life work, no dreaming study, no arm-chair labor. I am afraid of myself. I want to get away from the musty smell of holy books, from the droning sound of orthodox sermons. Fresh air is what I want and is what I cannot get within this mouldering old parsonage. I want to get out into the breezy, busy world, where every man's motto is: 'fair play but no favor.'"

He looked so thoroughly aroused, so bravely in earnest that his mother gazed at him wondering. A jealous pang shot through the heart which had yearned so over this boy's dreaming boyhood, had expended such a wealth of patient prayer to bring about the wondrous miracle of his transfiguration, while her girl rival had wrought it by the glance of a bright eye: the magic of a few careless words. But she would not stand up-

on the manner of his saving—just so he be saved.

"And now," resumes Augustus, catching his breath quickly as if taken a little aback at his own daring; "I shall expend the two weeks which father persists in waiting for my answer in looking for this real life-work that I say I want. I will get it close at hand, mother, if I can, for bad as I am, I believe it would cost you a pang to have me go far from you. Then I can come to you for strength. You will let me talk to you about Lucy, and you will help me to keep hope and courage, and resolution alive."

Mustering all the enthusiasm possible over a young lady whose name was only an hour old in her experience, Mrs. Ames said all manner of encouraging things to her son, with a half-guilty feeling that this was not just what her stern husband would approve.

Father and son meet again at the dinner table, but there is no allusion made to the subject of that morning's interview. The meal disposed of in unsocial silence, Mr. Ames retires once more to his study, Susie and her mother to the family sitting-room, and Augustus, with a face into which a new business air is fast creeping, takes his hat and goes down town.

Down town on that occasion resolves itself into Judge Weyland's comfortable library, where, as he expected, he found the Judge and Paul; and where, as he did not expect, he found Mr. Timothy Lonsdale, the well-to-do president of Wickam's only bank.

The Weyland mansion was one of those houses into which a person may always enter in confident expectation of finding folks in a good humor, and of spending a pleasant half hour.

The thread of discourse was snapped abruptly in two by Augustus's entrance, to be resumed only after the merry Judge had made his nephew welcome, asked after his frame of mind since the lecture he felt sure he had been subjected to, informing him that nothing less than imprisonment for two weeks upon bread and water was to be Paul's sentence; then back to his visitor, leaving Augustus to turn interrogator: "Well, have you carried out your resolution to go to work as soon as you returned to go to Wickam?" he asks of Paul.

"I have. Father has consented to let me read law in his office, and I go to work tomorrow"

"To work!" with a touch of the old bitterness. "As usual, Paul, you have got the cream, and I the blue-john. But I wish you all manner of pleasantness, old fellow, in the hard career before you."

"Don't sneer, Gus. If you think it is to be all play, because I am to read under father, you make a huge mistake. The old gentleman is a perfect martinet when it comes to business. I expect to occupy under him, for the first year, the dignified and exalted position of office-boy, with privilege to read his books when there are no errands to be run, with clothes and victuals for remuneration; to be gradually promoted to copying clerk, and so up, round by round until, as he tells me, I will be privileged to climb as near the top round, as industry and mediocre ability will carry me. Now for your good resolutions."

"I have had a rousing interview with father, resulting in a positive refusal on my part to comply with his wish that I should enter the ministry, and a positive refusal on his part to have anything to do with me if I do not."

"The deuce! That rather complicates things."

"Yes. But—" Augustus stopped and listened.

"The trouble is, sir, to get hold of a young man, nowadays, who knows the meaning of the word 'work!' Our boys have been reared all wrong, Sir, all wrong. One comes to you, wanting you to accept him on the strength of his good old family name—as if I care who the deuce my clerks' great-grandfathers were. So the great-grandsons are not worth a copper. Another comes with good recommendations, can do this thing, that thing, the other thing, in the most irreproachable manner, if—you can only keep him sober long enough to do any one thing. Another regards all manner of work and all necessity for work as a cursed degradation, and bestows just so much time and thought upon his duties, as are left over from the real business of his life, which is cursing fate for not sending him into the world with the gold spoon in his mouth, that he thinks his transcendent merit entitles him to. But they are quick enough to howl over the facility with which skilled labor from abroad can find employment.

"Patience, Mr. Lonsdale, patience. Bear in mind that the present generation

of our boy's (reversing the order of entomology), answer to the chrysalides of the butterflies of the past, from which shall emerge the grub-worm of the future."

"Maybe so, sir, maybe so, but God help the country while we are all webbed up, waiting for the grub-worms."

"Deuce take it, Lonsdale! you're as much of a pessimist as the longest-faced preacher of them all. It is their duty under contract, I believe, to try to prove that the world's going to the devil upon wheels, but you"—

"Very well, Weyland, very well, call me pessimist, or any other pet name you choose, but when I can find a young man who will walk boldly into my office, and say:—'Mr. Lonsdale, I am poor and in need of work. I do not profess to understand your business very well, but if industry, and sobriety and application will satisfy you, I would like you to give me a trial. I have no recommendation. You will have to take me entirely on my own'—I say if a young man with an honest face—and I believe in faces, Weyland—and straight-looking eyes—none of your shifting glances for me—should come to me in that manly fashion I'd give him a trial, by George, I would, sir, if his grandfather was the devil, and his grandmother a lineal descendant of the anthropophagi. And I would help him, sir; by George, I would."

"Mr. Lonsdale," said a voice at his elbow—a voice trembling a little from nervous excitement, "I am poor and in need of work. I do not profess to understand your business very well, but if industry and sobriety and application will satisfy you, I would like you to give me a trial. I have no recommendations. You will have to take me entirely on my own." It was Augustus Ames repeating the banker's own words, with a flushed face and nervous voice.

Mr. Lonsdale reddened angrily. "How, now, young man. Did you take my words for the text of a very flimsy joke?"

"No, sir, I am as much in earnest, as I hope you are."

Three pair of surprised eyes were looking at him.

"It means this, sir. My father wishes me to study for the ministry. I cannot do it. Nor can I any longer burden him with my support. I want work.

I would rather find it near home than farther off. But work I must do."

"Is not this Judge Weyland's nephew?" asked the banker, not yet quite recovered from his surprise.

"Deny me, Gus, deny me, if you find the connection likely to injure you, says the Judge cheerfully, for he sees that Augustus is growing nervous under the critical gaze of the clear-sighted business man and he wants to sustain him in this new course of manly independence.

"Yes, sir. But I am afraid Judge Weyland can tell you very little good of me, for I know more myself. I have been an idle, repining dog. I want to go to work, and all I ask is to be taken on trial."

"Your hand, boy. Timothy Lonsdale never yet went back of his own words and he's not going to do it now. You shall have the trial you ask for."

"To commence when, sir?"

"Tomorrow, if you choose."

As he rises to say good-bye, Uncle Weyland puts one hand kindly on his shoulder; "I am proud of you, my boy, you've seized the helm holdly," he says to him, with a warmer pressure of the hand than usual. Paul, too, says something complimentary about "bricks" and "trumps," but Augustus seems in a hurry to get away from them all. He wants to go off somewhere by himself; not even Paul would be welcome company just then. He has taken a bold plunge, and he feels slightly nervous after it. He goes out through the big iron gate, and walks and walks, not towards home, but out toward the hill which the Wickam people call "Sunset Hill."

He mounts to its summit, and sees below him all Wickam. The sun is nearing the horizon, and has used his waning strength to set all the windows in the houses down yonder ablaze with glory. He lingers lovingly about the tree-tops, gilding the branches of the tall cottonwoods that point upwards like glittering church spires. He dips here and there with great golden splashes into the heaving bosom of the little river that runs so rapidly by Wickam, as if it had a world of business to dispatch before it can hope to find rest in Ocean's broad bosom.

The sunlight fades from window, tree-top and river, and rests only on him, bathing him in a flood of yellow light.

He accepts it as the chrism of his baptism in the new life of manly endeavor.

He is glad no one sees fit to wander up to Sunset Hill that evening; with folded arms he looks down upon the town, seeing in its hurrying, bustling, jostling crowds a meaning for the first time. Every one seemed to have been doing something in the world but himself; only he had been as idle as the idle motes in sunny ray. But now he had joined the laboring many. This dreaming evening on Sunset Hill, with the bars of gold fading sadly then into bars of lead, would see, maybe, his last of idle dreaming.

With the coming day would dawn his day of trial.

His day of trial! As if life itself was not one prolonged trial of "cruel mockings and scourgings. Yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MOTHER'S PLEA.

"Happy be

With such a mother! Faith in womankind
Beats with his blood; and trust in all things
high

Comes easy to him, and though he trip and fall
He shall not bind his soul with clay."

—Tennyson.

To the minister's wife, looking forward with a great dread to the day, when her son should be summoned once more before his father—a man, whose will in all the long years of her married life, she had never known yield to tears or supplication—the two weeks, during which, to her tender soul, the fate of the nation seemed trembling in the balances, made cruel haste to speed them to the land of yesterdays.

So Augustus, whose employer, Mr. Lonsdale, though far too cold a man of dollars to be lavish of wordy commendation, was treating him with daily increasing cordiality, which he chose to interpret into tokens of satisfaction—they passed away indifferent, slowly. He was anxious for that final interview, and yet all his new-found courage could not ensure him against some decidedly nervous twinges and a prophetic weakening about the knee-joints whenever he thought about it.

The moral atmosphere of the parsonage, never any too bracing, was depressing enough during that probationary period to have given the lightest-

hearted humming bird that ever sucked a rose, a fit of the vapors. But for the absence of crape streamers and a prevalence of wet pocket handkerchiefs, one might easily have been pardoned for asking which room the body lay in.

The fateful morning dawned, and the fateful words: "I would like to see you in my library, Augustus," were spoken by the minister, as before, at the close of the morning meal.

There was a certain strange gentleness of voice and manner about the clergyman that morning. A gentleness, springing perhaps from the same source whence comes the gentleness of some stern judge, about to dole out to a fellow-sinner the awful sentence of earthly condemnation, that is to bar him out forever from God's sun, which he made to shine upon the just and upon the unjust.

"I will be with you presently, father," Augustus answered, not leaving his seat just yet, but playing a tremulous tattoo with his spoon upon the edge of his coffee-cup, secretly hungering for "mother," to say something brave and encouraging.

But Mrs. Ames has nothing brave and encouraging to say. She thinks the son is right, but it is not for her to pronounce the father wrong. She sends one imploring look after the stern-faced Judge, which unfortunately, takes effect only upon the dingy cord and tassel which confines Mr. Ames's dressinggown loosely about his waist.

Susie pushes her plate from her with a peevish shove. Life is made a burden to her by reason of "father's iron will and Gus's stupid obstinacy."

It would be much sicer, and more comfortable she was sure, for all of them, if Gussy would only do as father wished and be a minister. Where was the great objection? He had to make a living some how or other, and she sure was being a minister was a very easy way, and then it was so genteel. And Gussie would never have to go rusty and seedy like father. He was so handsome that the women of his congregation would suffocate him in slippers and dressing gowns, and white satin stoles, and never let him want for anything; she only wished she had his eyes and his opportunities.

Augustus looked at this sister of his, who was so flippantly suggesting embroidered slippers and white satin stoles, as advantageous offsets to the darkest

manner of perjury, with a sad sense of Susie's utter unlikeness to a sister he knew of, a sister who made the sunshine and the peace of a home.

But as long as Gussy was so bent upon money-making (and she was sure money must be a delightful thing to have), why could not father give up for once in his life! She did believe, that right under that roof, where it was popularly supposed they were all too ripe for heaven to feel the trials of earth, there was more wretchedness than in all the town besides.

"Hush! Sue. Your peevishness, I am sure, is one of the prime sources of that very wretchedness."

"Oh! of course it is I; I am the root of all evil. It is I who have made the house like a grave-yard by refusing to become a minister. It is I who have been stupifying myself with"—

"Susan."

She halts abashed, to see before her her mother, with pale face and reproachful eyes, and her brother waiting for the completion of her cruel sentence, with a darkly flushed brow, and flashing eyes.

"Father is waiting, Augustus," Mrs. Ames says gently, and he gets up and goes away.

He found his father seated in his big leathern chair—a chair which has taken in a certain stiff, stern physiognomy of its own, from long association with the unbending rector of Wickam Church. Mr. Ames does not proffer a seat to his son. The handsome rebel stands before his father, one hand resting lightly on the desk, from which so many warnings of the wrath to come, so many threats of appalling nature, have been fulminated, waiting for the question.

"Well, You have come prepared with your answer I presume."

"Yes, sir."

"Go on."

There is no token of agitation about the stern old rector, unless, maybe, it was in a certain huskiness of his voice, or in the white glistening knobs of his knuckles, which show what a fierce grip he has fastened upon the arms of his chair.

"I cannot do as you wish me father. Forgive what you choose to call my rebellion, but I cannot go into the pulpit."

St. John Ames gazed into the determined face of his son mutely, but with

such a strange white agony creeping slowly up over his stern strong face, that Augustus sprang forward in alarm.

"Back! I need none of your assistance; I will have none. I have asked it but once in your life, that once you have refused it. You have braved me; you, the son of my loins, the only inheritor of my name, have foiled me in the dearest wish of my life. It is heaven's just punishment upon me for forming any wish reaching out presumptuously into the future, which is no man's land to build upon. You have held my expressed desire as if no more moment than the winds that blow unheeded about your ears. You have robbed me of the staff upon which I had hoped to lean when my strength failed me and my steps tottered as I went about the Master's work. When they brought you to me in your swaddling clothes, I took you in my arms and I blessed you and I blessed God, rejoicing with exceeding great joy, that in His goodness He had seen fit to send me a man-child. And I said in the boastfulness of my sinful heart, I am not young, this child has come to me to be my strong and trusty prop—to finish, it may be, the works of my hand when God calls me home. In this hope I reared you—in this hope I have lived until this hour. You defy me—you disobey me—yet One—whose shoe-latchet earth's best and mightiest are not worthy to unloose, did not scorn to drain the cup of mortal agony to its bitterest dregs at a father's bidding."

"But I drive! You have abdicated a son's duties; it is but just you should forfeit his claims. Henceforth, you are to me as other men—poor, blind stumblers—to be saved through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, with a heart to be cleansed through the Blood of the Lamb—nothing nearer, nothing dearer. You understood that a persistence in your disobedience was to absolve me from all future responsibility upon the score of your career and your support?"

"I did sir; and have acted upon that understanding."

"Have acted?"

"Yes, sir; and have found employment as assistant cashier in Mr. Lonsdale's banking house."

Great cords knotted themselves about the rector's wrinkled forehead, and his face flushed to a deep purple, while a

long convulsive thrill shook his whole frame. Hope died hard in the old man's breast.

Until Augustus made that calm, practical statement of what he had actually done, his father had clung to the hope that when the boy saw in what deadly earnest he was, the old habit of almost child-like submission would reassert itself, and the darling wish of his heart would be gratified. But the boy stood there before him, meting him out new coldness for the old coldness, new sternness or the old sternness, new determination for the old iron determination which he had brought to bear upon his child in singleness of purpose, in purity of soul, but in sad forgetfulness that it is well always to temper justice with mercy.

"Did I understand that you had been employed by Mr. Lonsdale?" He finds voice again, but it is a pitifully trembling and husky voice.

"Yea, father; 'have' been employed." The young man speaks very gently and very patiently; for, in presence of his father's great and bitter disappointment—how great and how bitter—the rector (shaken for once out of his stony reserve), betrays in his trembling voice, in his almost pleading eyes. Augustus finds it in his heart to forgive all the weary, by-gone years that have been crowded so full of harsh admonitions, merciless censures and bitter reproaches for his own youthful short-comings, and only sees before him the father, whose pride of will, whose dearest wishes have been laid low through his agency. So it comes very easy for him to be gentle and patient and pitying.

A long silence. In which the minister's right hand rises and falls upon the arm of his chair, with a slow, muffled thud, as if he were nailing down the coffin-lid, in which lay his dead hope, his darling, pale and lifeless, with closed lids and frozen pulses.

One long, convulsive sigh flutters through his tightly-closed lips. It is the father's last protest.

When he speaks again all the sorrow-born softness had fled his face, leaving it cold, and stern and familiar.

"It will be hard for your mother to give you up."

Augustus starts convulsively, and his bearded lip quivers: "Father, you would not be so merciless?"

"Why should I be annoyed with the presence of Mr. Timothy Lonsdale's clerk?"

"For mother's sake, not for mine, I ask you not to close your doors against me."

"Go! You have gained your point in a mighty matter. Why should I contend with you over a little one? Whether you occupy a room in this house or do not, is a matter of paltry insignificance. I am tired, I wish to be alone."

Augustus leaves him, and goes straightway to his comforter.

"Mother, I hope I have been lord of myself. I think she would have smiled on me today. But it has been an ordeal," and then he tells her all about the fateful interview and its outcome.

She thanks God it is over, and is grateful that her boy is to be allowed to remain under the parental roof. She had feared the worst from her husband's well-known implacability.

So Augustus goes away to the bank every morning, and comes home every day after banking hours, and things at the parsonage look pretty much as usual, excepting that between father and son runs a frozen current of etiquette, chilling nature's warm pulses until they almost cease to beat at all.

The father's case is sadder than the son's—as long as hope lives, the heart cannot die. But all hope in the future had died for the gray minister, when he had to put away from him the one hope of having his son labor by his side in the Lord's vineyard. The laborers were so few! But henceforth, there was nothing but one dreary round of duty before him, stretching onward until it reached the peaceful grave. He did not repine at the leaden prospect; only somehow, he did not believe that he would find it very hard to go if God should see fit to call him hence. The twilight of existence had closed in about him.

For Augustus, it was still radiant noon-day. And far up in the skies, just now a little clouded, by reason of his father's implacable resentment, the sun of a brightening present, and a promising future, shone resplendently. He went about the new order of things bravely at first, nourished by hope and love, but who does not know how faint the heart will grow after-while, and how wan the cheek, if nothing be added to these two for the soul's sustenance.

So, after a brave while, the new Augustus lagged a little, and his eyes lost their bright hopefulness, and his step its elasticity.

"What is it, my son?" asks the comforter, laying a caressing hand upon her boy's glowing brow.

"Mother, it all begins to feel so much like a dream. Never to see her—never to hear her sweet voice—never to hear of her, even—I begin to wonder if there really is a Lucy Samuels, or if I have dreamed it all."

"Why not write to her," suggests the comforter, daringly.

"Oh, mother, would you?" His face glows radiant at the very idea.

"I would."

And the same mail which carries out to Miss Samuels an humble, imploring letter from the son, asking just for an occasional friendly letter, to keep his heart from starving, carries, also, a letter from the mother, written and despatched with more secrecy than in all her poor simple life Maria Ames had ever before practised.

This is the letter which she wrote with such nervous trembling, and stole guiltily out of the house to mail with her own hands.

"MY DEAR MISS SAMUELS:—I know I am doing a very unusual thing in the writing of this letter. Maybe, an unprecedented thing; but I do not believe you are one of those common-place girls who must have a well-established precedent for every word and act. Read this letter, whatever you may think of the writer, please, patiently and carefully; for I am afraid its full import may not come to you at a first or a careless reading.

My only and very dear son, Augustus, has returned from your neighborhood, transformed from a sad-faced, dreaming, aimless boy into a happy, resolute, and hopeful man. Transformed, dear Miss Samuels, by his overmastering affection for yourself. I do not know you, but I do know your family, and I can imagine what manner of girl it is, who has gained such boundless influence over my son's wayward nature.

Augustus has been the source of much mental anxiety and grave distress to his family. It is not easy for a mother to acknowledge that her patient love, her fervid prayers, her tender expostulations, have all failed to accomplish what you, with your sweet face and kind words have accomplished, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps unwillingly. I have been careful to extract from my son every word of yours, which, in his blinded love, he

construes into encouragement. I can see nothing in your gentle expressions to warrant his bounding hope, that some day or other, when he has made his mark in the world, your hand will be the reward of his patient devotedness.

But his delusion is his salvation. It is the dread that he may come to see things as I see them, which inspires me with the daring to write this letter to you.

The fond hope of some day calling you his wife is all the foundation of his new strength, manliness, and resolution. Be pitiful, and leave him his dear delusion; for awhile, at least. Then, maybe, grown strong through love, he may be better able to bear a crushing truth manfully.

You will wonder, perhaps, what manner of woman it is, who asks you to stoop to deception, that her son may be spared a pang! I pause, and wonder if I am asking you to do wrong. I hardly know. What with a mother's intense yearning over an erring son, what with the sad recollection of how powerless her own efforts have proven, maybe I am getting right and wrong confused. Go to your brother. I know him. Pure, strong, without fear, and without reproach. Ask him if he wanted to medicine a sick son!—if he would not tenderly leave it a cherished delusion—rather than start it into torturing knowledge of the truth, simply because it was the truth.

I do not share my son's hope that you will ever be his wife. I can detect in all he has told me nothing but the fervid heat of his own passion infusing a factitious warmth into your gentle expressions of friendship.

But I, his mother, who have tremblingly watched him, vacillating between the poles of negative goodness and positive evil, stretch out my hand eagerly to you as to a powerful ally in my child's salvation. Let him dream on, sweet girl. Do not awaken him yet a little while, and a mother's fervent blessing will attend you all your days.

You will think my daring culminates when I tell you that I know it his intention to ask you to write to him now and then. Will you not do it? Grant his request, and God's blessing will be upon you as upon a good, brave girl, who has stepped a little way off the beaten high way of custom to cheer and strengthen a fellow-creature, whose need of such cheer and strength is very sore. Pardon this letter, written by a mother, pleading for her son's earthly redemption."

When Lucy Samuels read this letter, she let fall upon the mother's plea a few gentle, pitying tears, and she made the son's heart glad by a calm, cordial, friendly response to his entreaties for a correspondence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NATURE'S TEACHINGS.

"To him, who in the love of nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language."
—Bryant.

It was Sunday. December's first-born. A radiant, bright-browed herald, ushering in the month, most honored of high heaven, with a glory of earth and air and sky, which seemed mutely proclaiming the glad tidings of great joy that Christendom's jubilee was coming on apace.

It was a day to make the bare fact of existence a source of pleasurable contemplation. So Delphine Staunton found it, as throwing open her shutters, she flung herself upon the low, old-fashioned window-seat, drinking in the fresh, invigorating air, while her gaze wandered abstractedly over all her small demesne.

The grand old forest trees ("the one glory of the place," she called them) were leafless now, their shivering branches sparsely clothed with long fringes of Spanish moss, and through them she could see the little bayou which curved round about the slight eminence on which the house was built. Its waters looked dark and sombre enough, when the willow and cypress clasped shadowy hands across its bosom; but now, with God's bright sunlight falling unhindered upon its dimpling face, they danced and rippled joyously, as if in the fullness of gratitude for their deliverance. The field larks, grown bold from long-time security, scudded busily this way and that way, through the short-brown stubble, congratulating each other upon the brilliant *coup-de-grace*, December had dealt the rains and winds which had made existence so dreary to them. The red-capped wood-peckers hammered away noisily, in scandalous disregard that it was Sunday, and that in it they should do no manner of work.

All nature was redolent with earnest, solemn, tender meaning.

But Nature's Bible teachings are lost upon the very young. In life's earlier years Ego assumes proportions which fills the moral vision to the exclusion of mightier things.

The wants of the present, the hopes of the future, loom too big for the sweet influences of the Pleiades, the pathos of a fading leaf, the dying glory of the grass, to pierce the clogged senses. It is

only in later years when it gradually comes to us to know that, after all, nature is not our hand-maiden, the world is not our foot-stool; when we come out of our shrunken ego, and are lowly enough to learn wisdom of a blade of grass, to receive instruction from the lilies of the field, that nature speaks to us in her grandest voice, like some mighty orator at his best, when conscious that he speaks to those who have ears to hear, and will hear.

This is the why that Delphine, with the great Book of Lessons spread open there before her, gazing upon it with the body's eye alone (like some idle school child, over the task too abstruse), saw no new meaning in the brightly-illuminated page. She only felt vaguely that the yoke she thought so heavy pressed lighter than was its wont. Somehow, life seemed a good and pleasant thing to have.

She was so young, and life was so empty of meaning outside its personal bearing, so full of her small sorrows and smaller joys; there was so much in that personal life for her puny will to direct and settle, that she may be pardoned the egoism which disqualified her for anything better than a sort of sensuous pagan delight in the radiant glory of that Sunday morning.

The day was so brightly inviting, that she wished there was some one there to help her enjoy it. Some one a little higher in the intellectual scale, than Blucher, to go out with her into the blessed sunshine, to keep the day holy in old druidical style, under the branching oaks. When she finally left her window, it was with a great heart-hunger for this some one, impelling her to make one mighty effort to gratify poor humanity's greatest need—the need of sympathy.

Where should she turn for it? To her faithful old sergeant? Poor "Dan"—big-hearted, loyal, simple Dan. He was bubbling over with sympathy of a certain common sort. If she did but tread on a sharp pebble, or contract her brow with transient pain, he was prompt with sympathetic words and sundry useful suggestions about poultices and lotions. But of that higher sympathy, the peculiar property of fine natures, which can attune two souls to one sweet melody, which can catch the glancing meteor as you catch it, hear a grand burst of eloquence with your ears, he was as utterly

devoid as Blucher's self, His mother! She might as well demand sympathy of a wet blanket. Did not Mother Danbury make it a pious rule to quench every burst of enthusiasm over earth's fading glories, by a solemn reminder: That a soul to save she had; a God to glorify? Her own mother! Ah! surely there she had a right to look for it. Maybe she had never gone about procuring it the true way.

Delphine Staunton had never known a real mother, but her ideal mother had been a sort of glorious and glorified compound of gentleness, wisdom and patience. Some one who would come to her when physical pain racked her frame, and by the magic of a cool, soft hand, lull every tortured nerve to rest. Some one who, when life looked dark (and, oh! how dark it can look in the passionate years of youth!) could exorcise the spirit of gloom with words of comforting wisdom. Some one to whom it would be altogether pleasant and easy to pour out one's soul, never doubting that one's sorrows would be shared, one's pleasures doubled at each outpouring.

All this she had known when it was not her birthright. All this might she not know again? She would ask. Perhaps she would receive.

Mrs. Staunton was still in her bedroom, whence she never emerged before ten or eleven in the morning, at which time, she threw Mother Danbury's systematic soul into a perfect frenzy of indignation, by partaking of a lonely *déjeuner à la fourchette*, a cup of *café noir*, being all her civilized stomach could digest, at the barbarous hour the family breakfasted.

Coming straight from her breezy outlook at the window, Delphine could hardly distinguish objects in the sedulously-darkened chamber. Mrs. Staunton did not affect the prying sunbeams. They were naughty, tell-tale children, ready to gossip about crows' feet, and wrinkles, and yellow skins, which art, kinder than nature, helped her hide. But the daughter knew that somewhere within that dingy chamber (a perfect chaos of discarded robes, cast-off slippers, powders, perfumes, pomades, French novels, false hair, and other component parts of a *passé* female) she would find her mother, carelessly enveloped in a morning dress, whose silken facings, furnished a tabu-

lar statement of the number of cups of coffee which the lady had partaken of in true oriental style—reclining, but not with Oriental deftness.

"Mother, is not this day tempting enough to beguile you out of your dark seclusion? It is a delicious, crisp morning. You cannot help enjoying it," she says, sending her voice towards the darkest corner, where she knows the sofa to be located.

Mrs. Staunton slips her finger between the pages of her novel, and executes a deliberate yawn, before replying:

"My sweet daughter, when will you learn, that poor mamma is not strong and vigorous, and buxom, as is her country-raised girl? As it is, I rise far too early for my health's good. But to go out into your crisp, delicious day—as my absurd darling calls it would soon put your troublesome mamma out of everybody's way."

"I thought," says the daughter, hope dying out of her voice, "I might prevail on you to go with me to hear Mr. Samuels."

"To your little house that you call a church! My poor neglected one, grown up in such utter ignorance, that there is but one church, and that one under the direct government of our holy father—the successor to St. Peter—the Prince of Apostles, with whom your pretty-faced M. Samuels has nothing in common. My sweet child, mamma would commit a sin in granting that request of yours."

"But you have seen so little of the country."

"So little, *ma chère*. I have seen your black mud; I have seen your big, ugly, frowning trees; I have seen your tumble-down homes; I have seen your fat kine and your lean kine. Have I left anything unseen? Bah! To think my splendid William could have come out of such a bog. I wonder not that he turned his back upon it forever, and adopted my beautiful France for his country. Ah! My poor little daughter if you could but—"

But Delphine had already grown weary of unkindly comparisons between her native primitive woods and the civilized garden-spots of her mother's beautiful France, of Paris versus Wickam, of Frenchman vice Americans. So she interposed a quick:

"Then you will not come with me."

"No, Delphine, mine. I shall not leave

my room until compelled to by the arrival of your babe of the woods—that superb M. Emile. You remember he dines with us today by appointment.”

“I remember,” says Delphine, a little coldly. “But please, mother, do not use that little ‘your’ so often in connection with myself and M. Girardeau.”

“Why not? Is he not yours by right of discovery? Did you not find him in the woods sick, and bring him home, and nurse him well, like a pretty little Samaritan?”

“Yes,” says Delphine, with a light scornful laugh. “But I think I owed him some compensation for the maltreatment he received at Dan’s hands on my account.”

“And which he has forgiven so nobly. Now, there is a man for you—so elegant, so refined, so *recherché* (if I may use the word) from the curl of his lovely mustache, to the toe of his tiny boots.”

“His polish I admit; it is as patent as that upon his boots. His manliness is not so apparent.”

“And why?” asks Madame, tartly, hoisting the national flag in defence of her countryman—he was French—ergo, he was faultless.

Delphine declines accepting M. Girardeau as sufficient excuse for sharp words.

“There, mother, do not become excited over your pet. I am glad M. Girardeau’s company gives you pleasure, as it is natural it should; you, so far away from your own country, and he the only one you can converse comfortably with, and as your friend, he will always be most welcome. But, pardon me, if I cannot see anything very admirable about the young gentleman.”

“No. Your clumsy, ill-bred Max I suppose is your superb. A man who does not know how to address a lady; a man who constituted himself an amateur detective to prove your own mother a pickpocket and an imposter.”

Grown used now to the darkness, Delphine can see the dark, angry flush, which reddens her mother’s face—can see the loosely-robed form quivering with passion, and the attenuated hand coiled up into a vindictive little fist.

Mrs. Staunton, in her rage, has forgotten that Delphine knows nothing of the distrust and suspicion which she excited upon her arrival. In mercy it had been kept from her. She is reminded by

the girl’s startled eyes and her bewildered—

“Mr. Morgan did what, mother?”

“There! Bah! I have been foolish. I have talked nonsense. Your Mr. Max is a very good man. But my M. Emile is a better. Go, now. I will not talk any more.”

Delphine was very willing to go. She had asked and she had not received. She had reached the door, when her mother recalled her.

“My daughter”—the voice was so serious, so grave indeed, that Della turned, in eager hope of hearing some explanation of that strange speech about Max.

“Well, mother!”

“Could you not, will you not, try, for my sake, dear child, to prevail upon Mother Jeremiah to discard the odious frying-pan today, and give us a little less boiling lard for our dinner. Mamma will feel so grateful.”

Chilled and disgusted, Delphine turned from the door which she had entered in search of the higher sympathy.

Her mother’s wishes respecting the dinner, were dutifully conveyed to Mother Danbury, whose lugubrious habit of lamenting had gained for her from the flippant Frenchwoman the soubriquet of Mother Jeremiah.

Then she and Dan and Mother Danbury went out together to walk through the woods to Mr. Samuel’s little church.

Somehow, the glory of the day had departed, and she walked very silently along, between her two humble friends, drawing irrepressible comparisons between the woman she had just left, lying in a greasy morning dress, reading a French novel, in the midst of disorder and confusion; and Eleanor Morgan—stately, calm-eyed, wise Eleanor Morgan.

She went through the morning service with a dreary indifference, and settled herself to listen to the sermon, caring very little beforehand what its purport might be.

“It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.”

She started and turned her lustrous eyes full upon the minister’s gentle face. Was he preaching at her? Had he dived into her soul and brought up the knowledge that she found her yoke heavy to bear? Was it her burden that had furnished him a text? Was it her he want-

ed to comfort, by showing how it was good that she should bear it now in the days of her youth. She almost expected to see those holy, tender eyes, turn pitiingly upon her. But when she saw them glance calmly, lovingly around, taking in all his little flock, addressing his words of comfort to all who bent beneath this world's heavy yoke with the light of a great wide-reaching, pity-shining about him, like a halo, she bowed her head abashed and humbled—blushing for her own egoism—for she knew then, that not she alone, bent beneath a rod—and she was young—it was well—he said—that she should bear the yoke in her youth.

Perhaps! But who will refuse a dole of pity to the young heart called upon so suddenly to see its excellence, when all the time she is but conscious that it presses very sore, and the tender flesh rebels and quivers in impotent but natural rebellion.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHILDREN OF INIQUITY.

"He raised a mortal to the skies.
She drew an angel down."

—Dryden.

As the clock struck eleven Mrs. Staunton reluctantly laid aside her novel and prepared to manufacture herself for the day. An operation which consumed daily two or three hours of precious time, to say nothing of those less valuable commodities, serious meditation and absorption of soul.

The announcement that M. Emile Girardeau was below in no manner hastened her deliberate movements. "Presently," she said, turning her head slightly towards the small ebony messenger who made the announcement, revealing a face pearl-tint and saffron by sections.

Satisfied, finally, with her own vastly improved appearance (for since Mrs. Weyland's supervision of herself and her toilette, the greasy shabbiness had all disappeared), she glided down the carpeted stairway with her own cat-like noiselessness, to surprise her visitor, standing in the rapt adoration of a devotee before a framed likeness of pretty Lucy Samuels.

"*Charmante, n'est-ce pas?*" says a spiteful voice close to his ear, and M. Girardeau turns to greet his hostess.

Mrs. Staunton led the way to a sofa, intimating by a gracious wave of her hand that he was to share it with her.

"You come, reluctantly at a late hour, to give a report of your progress," Mrs. Staunton says, addressing herself to her visitor in their own language, and in tartly peremptory voice of a privileged monitor.

M. Girardeau glanced about him carefully.

He need not—they have the house all to themselves. Blucher, sunning himself upon the front steps, and the colored waif who had opened the door to him, being the only breathing things besides themselves, and neither Blucher nor Tony are French scholars.

"Suppose I tell you I have no progress to report."

"You dare not tell me so. I have waited long for this opportunity. Now I will hear it all."

"And yet, now that the opportunity has come, you make it so late that all the good church people will be back upon us before we have begun to talk."

"No, it is the first day of the month. They stay to drink their wine and eat their bread, which they call communing. We have plenty of time before us. Come! How have you progressed?"

"In a knowledge of this villainous language, passably; in a great disgust for myself, rapidly; in your handsome daughter's favor, not at all, I fear me."

"That is not strange. I see you here but seldom."

"Until Madame's arrival, the proprietress forbade. Mlle. Staunton is a very maiden of snow. While I was sick and helpless she was good and tender. When I got well and—"

"Dangerous!" Madam interpolates, scornfully.

"She froze into a beautiful statue of snow."

"What means have you adopted for melting that snow? For melted, you know, it *must be*."

"Every means which courtesy and American etiquette would allow."

"Emile, do not try to deceive me. It is worse than useless. I know as well as you can tell me how things stand. You have fallen in love with the wrong girl. Very well. I make no objection. You may love whom you please, and as many as you please; but you cannot marry whom you please nor as many as you

please. Give your pretty, golden-hair saint all your poor, little, battered-up heart, but your hand belongs to Delphine Staunton."

The Frenchman's cane was tracing tipsy hieroglyphics all over the carpet while she was speaking, and when she ceased, it pointed her sentence with a sonorous period.

"Are you not yet satisfied? You have your daughter. Why trouble yourself about me? Let me go, and I promise on the honor of a gentleman, never to molest you by word or deed."

"On the honor of a gentleman! Oh, you silly boy. There, no more nonsense. I cannot grant you many such interviews as this, for I do not know you. I never saw you before my daughter introduced you to me in this very dingy, old room. Bahl! these Southern Americans. What do they know of life? They have their big bodies of land, they have their big crowds of blacks, they live in their tumble-down houses, they fare worse than the shopkeepers of Paris—and they call it living."

"What has all that to do with our business?" asks the Frenchman, looking sullen and speaking rudely.

"True, nothing. But when you and my daughter are married, we will change all that. As you say, I have my daughter. And when that daughter is properly married, my comfort for life will be secured. Remember our contract."

"I am not apt to forget it, with you for my Mephistopheles."

"Maybe, no. But I can detect signs of restlessness about you which must be calmed, else restlessness may give birth to an ugly and troublesome offspring of resistance, treachery, and betrayal."

"I have told you, you need not fear me. All I ask is freedom to follow my newer and better inclinations."

"Freedom is just what you cannot have."

"I thought it was to be one or the other—you or I—a husband or a mother?"

"Mutual safety demands that it should be both."

"What avail my daughter's big fortune unless I marry her to a husband of my own choice? You, a son of *la belle France* should find it come natural to have a parent settle these little *affaires de cœur*."

"But Mademoiselle's self! I have reason to like her. She is a brave, splendid girl. She has been kind to me. What has she done to me that I should cross the wide ocean to meddle thus impertinently with her lot in life?"

"Emile Girardeau, you have been just long enough with those hymn-singing, praying Samuels to become white-livered and putty-souled, like them. Your nerves are all melted into wax. This thing was all arranged long ago. You dare not recede. In France we do not recognize a daughter's preference. In due course of time you ask, and she shall say 'yes.' You know that you dare not oppose me."

"How about Madame's self?"

"Madame is secure; you cannot injure her."

A stare of astonishment, not unmingled with a certain look of fear, was fastened on her face by her countryman.

"Read that!" She flung a printed slip of paper into his lap.

As he read he turned very white, and when he handed it back there was that cowed look about the man that one may notice about a completely conquered hound.

"Now then, no more disagreeables for today. It was a bitter dose, but I had to administer it by way of anodyne. You were growing restless. What were we talking about? Oh, my daughter. If she had her own way she would eventually give her hand and fortune to M. Max. That she shall never do. I hate him. He doubted me, and he was not gentleman enough to hide his doubts."

"Doubted you! Monstrous!" (Conquered hounds will sometimes snarl and snap in an impotent fashion, you perceive.)

"Come! M. Emile is not in a pleasant humor. He must be in one before his intended wife comes home, else, I fear, his wooing will speed but poorly."

"Madame!"—Emile Girardeau raised his eyes towards Mrs. Staunton (who had risen, and was standing over him, with a beseeching look in them)—"I have done much for you—enough to damn me eternally; for you, or, to put it more justly, at your instigation, I stooped for the first time in my life to deceptions, lies, and treachery. When I left my master's office it was with the proud consciousness that he be-

lieved in me. For gold I have sold my soul. The gold is not yet mine; the contract may yet be nullified; let us enter into a new one."

A laugh full of scorn interrupted him, and once more that hideous paper was unfolded in Mrs. Staunton's hand, while she said, with biting emphasis:

"I am afraid Monsieur did not read this paragraph carefully enough. His knowledge of English is imperfect. I will take great pleasure in reading it to him, for it is necessary for his welfare that he should understand how easily I can send the information demanded by this 'Notice' to the first police station. And just think how the ugly story would sound in pretty, golden-haired Lucy's ears!"

The terror inspired by her horrible suggestion wrung great drops of mortal agony from the pallid brow of the man before her.

"Bah! We grow theatrical when we should be business-like and cool. You are but a clumsy tool, after all, Emile. I had a better opinion of you. But come, you were never known to have nerve for much until you had gone to the brandy-bottle for it."

The Frenchman did not await a second bidding. Following his hostess into the adjoining room, he watched her motions with feverish eagerness, as she unlocked her private *escritoire* and extracted from it a small wicker flask, full of the nerve-strengthening liquor.

Mrs. Staunton filled two glasses equally full, offered one to her guest, clinked her own merrily against it, and with the rollicking air of a *vivandiere*, tossed it off to the last drop.

"There's to stratagem and spoil," says the *vivandiere*, wiping her stained lips upon a dainty bit of cambric.

"And to treason," mutters Emile Girardeau, draining his glass with feverish eagerness.

"Now, then, we can talk more comfortably. M. Garçon will not have the vapors any more today. Life looks differently after the first glass of brandy. That is, if the brandy is the right sort. It is all in the quality of your drink, my boy, whether the world is a heaven or a hell—life a blessing or a curse. My brandy is good—life will look pleasant to you today. You love your blue-eyed Lucy Samuels?"

"By heavens, I do!"

"You cannot marry her, Monsieur; Max loves my daughter; he cannot marry her. So where is your case so hard? It is the case of half the men alive."

"Now talk to me about yourself."

Cheered by the brandy, M. Girardeau cast care to the dogs, and when, some little time after, Delphine appeared in the drawing-room, calm and lily-pure, in happy unconsciousness that they, her mother and the man she had tended in sickness so assiduously, had spent that bright morning in conspiring against her happiness, she found the visitor entertaining her mother as only he could, by a brilliant and amusing description of his experience as a French and drawing master.

Indignant as Mother Danbury was at having God's holy day of rest broken by the presence of a stranger to dine, her reputation as a notable housekeeper was too dear to her soul to admit of any neglect regarding the dinner.

Her own personal supervision was necessary for the preparation of the viands, and for the proper laying of the table.

The dining-room door had hardly closed upon her diminutive figure when it opened again, and a shrill: "Alexander!" went whistling through the wide hall.

Sergeant Danbury responded promptly, and reached the dining-room, to find his mother, her small black eyes ablaze with righteous indignation, armed with two cut-glass goblets, which she presented at him with truly soldierly activity.

"Alexander, smell that!" presenting arms with the right hand goblet.

Alexander sniffs obediently at the weapon, and says, "Brandy!"

"And that!" firing the second goblet at his nose.

"Brandy again!" says Dan, promptly."

"Now look at that, and at that, and at that," says Mother Danbury, her indignant finger skipping with lively rage from one dark tell-tale spot to another on the white marble slab of the side-board.

"Well, mother?"

"It is not well, Alexander. It is very far from well. Belial's daughter and Belial's son have spent the Lord's blessed Sabbath morning drinking brandy."

"How did they get here?" asks Dan, innocently.

"How did who get here, Alexander?"

"Belial's folks."

Dan's mother groans in anguish of spirit, and wipes the dark spots from the marble, making it glisten with her vigorous touch; wishing, in her pious heart, it was as easy to wipe the dark spots of ignorance from her benighted son's soul.

"I mean, my son," she explained, in that voice of pitying patience, one employs in addressing an embecile, "that Mrs. Staunton and the French tramp you and that giddy child picked up out of the mire have been drinking brandy together this morning."

"Oh! no—"

"Oh! Yes."

"Him, maybe; but not the master's wife, mother."

"What did he want with two glasses?"

"Maybe he took two drinks."

"Couldn't fill the same glass twice, I suppose?" says the female detective, with an unchristianlike sneer."

"Could, but might not choose to."

"Hush talking to me, Alexander. You are too good or too simple, one or both, to get along in this world. When you and the child brought home your sick Frenchman my heart misgave me. I knew no good would ever come of dealing with one of them creatures from a strange land, worshippers of candles and images, followers of the scarlet woman; and here, just when a body gets well rid of one down swoops another. I've got no opinion, anyway, of folks that can't remain quietly in the land it has pleased God to place them. That foreign beggar don't come prowling around here for no'ing. And as for the French mother—"

"Mother!" says loyal Dan, interrupting her in a short, quick voice, "it is the master's wife and the little lady's mother you're handling now. If you can't feel respectful, we'd best talk so, anyhow. I'm sorry to anger you, but we musn't forget our position, whatever comes."

"You've not angered me, Alexander. I am getting quite used to being put under foot, even by my own born son."

Dan turned away without any more words, and sought solace in his pipe, feeling more firmly convinced than ever that it took all sorts of people to make a world, and that quite a spicy variety of

the sorts were gathered together, that day, in the old homestead. But one of his mother's assertions he could not credit.

He might believe, with the Hindoos, that the universe is supported on the back of a big porpoise! Believe with the Mahommedans, that their Prince of humbugs (the circumstantial evidence of his old shoe to the contrary, notwithstanding) was translated painlessly to the realms of bliss! Believe with the wandering Tartar, that his grand Lama never dies, but migrates from one youthful body to another, always young and fresh. Might muster credulity for almost any of the insanely incredible beliefs extant; but believe that the master's wife would touch a drop of brandy! Never! If his own eyes had seen it, he would still have said, Never! If his own ears had heard the clinking of her glass against the Frenchman's, loyal Dan would still have said, Never!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. MORGAN TURNS BOHEMIAN.

"For, down the silvery tide afar,
There came a boat, as swift and bright
As shines in heaven some pilgrim star.
That leaves its own high home at night,
To shoot to distant shrines of light."

—Moore.

It was early in the spring following Mrs. Staunton's unlooked-for and unwelcome immigration, that Mr. Morgan, returning from his law-office at the usual hour in the afternoon, hanging up his hat, and laying down his cane with the deliberate precision of incipient bachelorhood, entered the family sitting-room and threw his small household into a perfect flutter of astonishment and dismay by announcing his intention of starting for Europe two weeks from that evening, making as little ado over it as if he had informed Eleanor of his intention to order mutton instead of beef from the butcher's boy next morning.

Not that Europe was such a terra-incognita, or so inaccessible, that for anyone to seek to reach it should be matter for either astonishment or dismay; but Max had so little of the Bohemian about him that his sisters were almost as well prepared to see the majestic old elm tree, that had shaded their back porch ever since it had been a porch, take up its trunk and start on a pedestrian tour,

as to hear that Max (as firmly wedded to his profession, as the elm to the soil) meditated a sea voyage.

"Going to Europe, brother?" says Evelyn, making exclamation points with her arched brows (either he or she must be mistaken).

"Europe, Max?" Eleanor echoes, more faintly; for her surprise is by no means as lively as Evelyn's.

"Yes, to Europe." Max repeats his news with the calmness, and the unsatisfactoriness of a sphinx, vouchsafing neither comment nor explanation.

"I will not require much preparation in the way of baggage, Eleanor. My business warrants my taking a partner into my office now, and I need only delay my departure long enough to familiarize him with such as I have on hand.

"I wonder what this strange move on brother's part means?" asks Evelyn of Eleanor, in the privacy of their own room that night.

Eleanor did not answer. She believed she knew very well the motive for this journey. Knew that Max missed the "child" more than he cared to acknowledge. Believed that this sudden departure for new and unfamiliar scenes was nothing but an effort on his part to rouse himself from the dull, leaden indifference to everything, that was settling down upon him (in spite of his own fierce self-denunciation for pusillanimity, and all that sort of thing), cramping his mental energies and clipping the wings of his ambition.

But she did not care to tell all her conjectures to Evy, dear as the gentle invalid was, for the two-fold reason that this great heart-bereavement of Max's, which she had possessed herself of, was too sacred a thing to be made matter of comment, and that it was a time-honored rule with herself and Max to keep from Evelyn everything that could add one shadow's bulk to the great black cloud under which her whole blameless life was doomed to pass.

The void made by Delphine's departure had been felt very keenly by all three of them, as witness the tenderness displayed in the careful gathering up of every half-forgotten possession of the "child's"—the half sad, half pleasant reminders of how Della had done this thing or loved that thing. But women, after the first passionate out-cry against fate, can make up their minds to the al-

teration in all their life-plans, more quickly and more thoroughly than can that prouder and more wilful sex who resent the interference of destiny as an impertinence not to be submitted to without an obstinate protest, a futile effort, as it were, to contest the will of Providence, and prove it invalid.

To Miss Morgan and Evelyn, living and moving altogether within the contracted sphere of home, the house was quieter and emptier and sadder for the "child's" exodus, but the round of a woman's never-ending duties rolled peacefully on, the days went gliding by.

To Max, coming home from the outside world (which was nothing but a great, busy, noisy workshop, in which he must toil with the rest of the gold-seekers and fame manufacturers until his self-appointed task was done), and missing the sweet face he had learned to love so well, the girlish voice rippling in laughter, or swelling in song, the ready ministration of her busy little hands, the house seemed but a sepulchre for pleasant memories.

He took himself severely to task for this unmanly and unavailing regret, but all the same, it staid with him, haunted him, dogged him, and finally impelled him to try the Lethæan properties of the Atlantic Ocean.

The appointed day for his departure came. His trunk was packed and standing in the hall, waiting for the van which was to carry it to the depot. Evelyn was bedewing his fresh handkerchief which she had taken from him, to "put a little more cologne on it," with tears and cologne in impartial proportions. Eleanor was carefully twisting and untwisting all the little paper parcels in his satchel, to make very sure that nothing had been forgotten. Max himself, was brushing his hat with a strangely nervous hand. After all, this journey was to be something of a wrench, and he found that there were some very lively emotions, totally disconnected with Delphine, thumping up and down under his vest.

Delphine had been to pay her old home several visits, since being torn from it; but, as she expressed it, sobbing the while: "What good did it do to come there in hat and kid gloves, and sit up in the parlor playing lady." Nevertheless, she had promised to come again.

"What shall I say to Della for you?"

asks Eleanor, clasping the satchel with a snap, as if the question had not come quite easily.

Max looks at her with a strange surprise in his fine eyes. Did she think he would place the salt ocean between him and his darling without the poor consolation of a good-by?

"Nothing. I shall go down to tell her good-by."

"Max," says the sister, laying her long, shapely hand in tender warning on his shoulder, "You will be strong. Promise me you will neither say nor do anything rash when you see her. For her sake, as well as yours, promise me."

"You need fear nothing. She is rich. You were wise in that disclosure. It is the strongest barrier you could have interposed, otherwise—"

A rumble of wheels, a convulsive embracing all round, and Max was gone, and the two women weeping in that hopeless fashion that women will weep in, so long as their hearts are more active than their heads.

Arrived at the homestead, Mr. Morgan gave his name to Tony, with repeated and impressive injunctions to inform Miss Staunton she was wanted. To his disappointment, Mrs. Staunton came gliding into the room and up to where he sat, offering a hand which he dare not refuse to clasp, yet which he could not accept in amity.

"Ah, M. Max, is it possible you have found time from those big law-books to pay a friendly visit?"

Max explained the occasion of his present visit. It was but to bid his ward good-by before starting for Europe.

"Europe! M. Morgan is on his way to Europe!"

Mrs. Staunton's dark face flushed strangely, her thin fingers closed tightly about the handle of her fan, and she eyed her visitor with a furtive, cat-like intensity, as if she would pry into his very soul.

But Max, so conscious of the why of this voyage, so unwilling that any eye should read his secret, was not looking at his hostess, else her queer discomposure might have set his cool brains to work on an almost forgotten trail.

The sad abstraction in his eye reassured her.

Of course M. Morgan would visit her beautiful France?"

"Eventually he might. His primary

destination was Scotland, to see a people and a country he most ardently admired."

"Was he to remain absent long?"

"That was a question he was not able to answer satisfactorily to himself as yet."

Then M. Morgan grew restive.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Staunton, but as I have but an hour or two at my disposal, may I ask to have Delphine summoned at once?"

"It is I who should beg pardon for not having told Monsieur before that my daughter is not at home. The giddy thing; she is so wild and wilful. One might as well try to cage a butterfly as to keep her in-doors."

Why was it that Max felt a something wonderfully like resentment rising in his breast against Delphine, "wild and happy?"

"But surely, this quiet neighborhood cannot furnish many temptations to giddiness or wildness."

"Not many, but such as they are, the child seems never weary of them. Two thirds of her time, is spent with her friend Miss Lucy Samuels; an altogether unexceptionable person, I believe," adds Mrs. Staunton kindly.

"I should call Miss Samuels, from what Delphine has told me of her character, a decidedly advantageous companion for your daughter."

"Sly puss! and what has she told you of the brother?"

"Of the brother?" says Max, sharply; "nothing, but that he was a good sincere Christian."

"Oh! These girls! These girls! Why, do you know, my dear M. Max, I believe that child would try to deceive me, her own mother, into thinking that it is the Sister Samuels she is so adoringly in love with, when her very shyness, her blushes, her tremor when the violet-eyed minister looks at her (and you know how a handsome young clergyman can use his eyes), tell her great secret. And now I am going to make so very bold. You know, in my beautiful France, we parents have almost entire control of our children's lands; it is as it should be there. But, I have no desire, none, now, to make the parental yoke too heavy for my little one's unaccustomed shoulders. I had hoped always to be able to call upon you for advice; but here you run away, across the big ocean, and I have

no one to go to; I must, then, ask it before you leave. My daughter loves, respects, reveres you. I know if her own beloved father had lived, his words could not have carried more weight with them. When she comes to me, as she will come when you are far away, and says, 'Mother, shall I tell him yes; I who am so ignorant of this Mr. Samuels, would like to be able to answer her just as her 'dear old Max' as the saucy minx calls you, would like to have her answered.' A face full of the most amiable respect was turned upon Delphine's revered Max, as her mother waited solicitously for his reply.

Max wished it were it not derogatory to one's manliness to throttle impertinent women, for impertinent speeches. He wondered if this woman's malice had turned his hair white by the power of an evil magic; somehow, her words made him feel so venerable, so antiquated. He wondered if that "giddy butterfly" was in company with the violet-eyed minister, while he set there wasting such a wealth of strong, yearning, hungry passion over her. He was in agony, and despised himself for his powerlessness in this woman's presence.

As his brow grew darker, Madame's became correspondingly serene.

"Ah! How neglectful. Monsieur had not even had a cup of cold water offered him." Her summons brought Tony and the cup of cold water, which Max really needed; it cooled the fire in his brain, and made articulation possible.

"It would be an impertinence for him to assist in forming any plans for her daughter's settlement in life on such slight grounds. He was so sorry Delphine should have selected that particular evening to visit her friends the Samuels."

On what insignificant pivots do the destinies of men often turn. Tony was the pivot; black, insignificant, dull-eyed Tony, was the pivot upon which Mr. Morgan was destined to revolve that morning from the depths of wretchedness to the pinnacle of happiness.

"Miss Delphine down to de B'yer, rowin'," says Tony solemnly, and disappears with his waiter and glasses.

"At the bayou?" says Max, growing radiant; "if you will excuse me, I will join the child there, and make my adieux." Thus boldly, he took affairs

into his own hands, and with a curt farewell to the mother, walked down to the little bayou, which, in the happy days when the child belonged to them, had been the scene of many a merry boat-race, Evelyn and he in one tiny skiff, Eleanor and the child in another. He had taught her himself how to handle the oars, and right proud had he been of his pupil's skill.

Mrs. Staunton just detained him long enough (holding him by the coat-lapel, and looking at him with such confiding trust), to beg him, now that her little girl had returned in time for him to see her, to give the child some good, wholesome advice before he left. "Talk to her, dear Monsieur Max, as freely as you would to your own daughter, for believe me, she entertains a truly filial affection for you, and I know your counsel will carry such weight with it."

Poor Tony's efforts in the cause of truth were attended with disastrous results. As Madame turns smilingly from bowing her visitor out (smiling, I think, with satisfaction over her Parthian dart), that small but voracious boy stood, luckily, just close enough at hand to furnish a vent for the lady's pent-up wrath, fear, malice, and all uncharitableness; her feelings, like Bob Acres' valor, escaping at the tips of her fingers, which closed like eagle talons on the boy's ebony ears. And ever after Tony was celebrated for the easy grace of his lies.

When Mr. Morgan reached the grass-fringed banks of the little bayou, he found the object of his search within easy call. But he did not choose to call. Seating himself on the twisted trunk of a water-oak, which cast cool, dark shadows far out over the stream, he waited for her to drift slowly up to where he sat.

Her back was turned to him as the boat glided slowly towards his ambush. She guided her tiny craft with easy but careless grace, dipping the oars deftly into the troubled waters, and watching with idle interest the pearls and diamonds that fell in a glittering shower from the dripping blades, until the last pearly drop had described its own tiny circlet, then ceased to be.

Max was glad she did not see him. He wanted to limn upon memory's faithful tablets the graceful contour of the slight figure, as it bent lightly to her oars, every fold of her white dress, the

long floating ribbons of pale blue, that she had flung backward over her shoulder, the jealous straw hat that hid the dear face from him, granting him but a glimpse of her clear-cut profile, as she turned her eyes now to this bank, now to the other, to "keep her bearings."

It was pleasant to sit there and have her drift slowly, surely, peacefully towards him, straight to him. He chose to accept it as an omen. Towards him, and not towards the violet-eyed minister, as that cruel woman had told him the current of that fresh young life was setting. To him, and not to the youthful pastor, that precious ship was coming in.

A great yearning to stretch wide to her the haven of his strong arms surged up in his soul. He was ready to ask her, the darling of his heart, if she could rest satisfied in the safe anchorage of his mighty affection; ready and waiting. Nearer, still nearer, she was slowly drifting to him. Farther, still farther, just as surely drifted ambition, fear, pride. The perfect love which casteth out all fear, swept in one resistless, mighty wave over him, as he sat there so quiet, under the water-oak. Delphine, his pearl, he must have; else, what was life to him? She was coming straight to him; coming of her own accord. Coming, angel-piloted, to bless him with her presence and her love. The swift-running bayou, was life's strong current; the little skiff, Destiny's argosy, coming in to him richly freighted with all he asked from the Giver of all good.

A low growl from the shaggy out-look upon the prow summoned Max back from cloud-land to see Destiny's argosy shoot, arrow-like, towards the shore farthest from him; to see a welcoming wave of the hand he was yearning so to clasp, thrown towards that other shore; to see a man's long, slender hand part the thick under-growth, and a tall, lithe figure emerge and take its stand close to the grass-fringed banks.

"It is the minister!" he says with bitter emphasis, between teeth close set in a fierce agony of jealous love. "He is fitted to find favor in a young girl's eyes. He is slender and graceful; the eyes that are watching my darling's coming can speak the language of love so well; he is—bah!—his love for this girl robbed me of all the man in my nature. After all, then, it was towards him and not towards me, that the rich argosy came in.

Well, I stand then, just where I stood before I fell to dreaming here in school-boy fashion. I came here to say good-by to the child; she is very dear; how dear, none but the searcher of hearts will ever know. I shall await her coming; their coming; they will come together; well, sooner or later; why not sooner? I should have had to see her coming towards me on some other man's arm; why not today? Why not on the arm of a good man—a gentleman?"

In the quick while he had been vibrating between the extremities of fancied bliss and wretchedness, the skiff had touched the opposite bank, and Delphine was motioning his rival to a seat in the stern.

But the minister declines; he hands her a package; holds her extended hand for a little while in a warm clasp; stays some half dozen seconds talking with the earnest familiarity of a privileged friend; pats Blucher on the head, and, springing lightly up the steep bank, disappears once more within the shadow of the woods.

But he has broken into the girl's idle mood; one or two swift strokes of the oars brings her opposite the water-oak, where Max, risen and freed by a vigorous moral shaking of all his lover's fancy, stands awaiting her coming altogether calmly.

"Max!" Surely it is joy, unmistakable and great joy, that rings so clear and true in her voice.

Mr. Morgan waits barely long enough for the boat to graze the shore, springs lightly in, holds the child's two small hands in his for a brief second, and motioning her to the seat she had offered the minister, he sends the little craft spinning out into the stream once more.

"Now I have you all to myself for a little while. Such a little while, child, it will be that no one need envy me it.

"Who should envy you, Max? And what do you mean by such a very little while? Have you not come down to pay me a good, kind visit?"

"I have come down to say good-by, Delphine, and I have had to be very patient, waiting for you to be done with your new friends."

"But they are good friends, Max," she answers, taking his sentence backward. "I hardly know what would become of me in this new life without Mr. Samuels and Lucy. She is all my company and he

is all my comfort. But, bah. I am full of nothing but myself. You said something about good-by. Have you been at the house long?"

"My good-by is to be a very long one, child. I am en route for Europe!"

If Mr. Morgan had declared himself en route for the moon, he could not have excited livelier surprise.

"Europe, Max! And what for?"

The old trick of asking inconvenient questions.

"I think it will do me good," he answers, leaving the complaint which required the benefit of a sea-voyage undiagnosed.

"Max going away from me! So far away that it is like death; one by one every source of happiness fails me. Oh, Max! Tell me how to stand this altered life. It grinds so; and now, you are going, it's going to be blanker and emptier than ever."

Max lays the oars down, and leaving the little boat to drift where it will, he draws the child near to him; takes her in his arms, and kisses the shining drops from her long lashes.

"Will you be sorry to have me go, Della?"

"Sorry! Oh, Max! Has not life been one prolonged 'sorry' ever since I have had to leave you all?"

"Your mother tells me different. She tells me that you are gay and happy; that your life, as Eleanor told you it would, is being filled up with new hopes, new pleasures, new friends."

"My mother! Who knows less of how my life is spent than she." The girl's eyes flashed at him through indignant tears.

"Come, remember your promise; tell me everything. I am going so far away from you; I would like to carry with me some bright pictures of your new life. Talk to me, will you not, dear child, as you used to talk, when you sat in the little green sofa under the jessamine vines?"

"Ah! My precious home; my beautiful home; how my heart aches for it."

In girlish abandon, she drooped her head until it rested upon her lap, yielding to a passionate burst of tears.

Max waited very patiently. It was easy to be patient, now that he had her all to himself; and while he waited for a second time that day, love threatened to

sweep away every consideration of prudence or expediency.

How mean and poor the very words sounded.

The gusty sobs died away gently. She had raised her head, and was deriving some sort of comfort from calling herself unflattering names; then quickly: "See, Max, we've drifted under the cypress; I hate the shadows; life is so full of them now-a-days."

With one swift stroke of the oar, Max sends the boat far out into the broad sunshine.

"But see how near God's sunshine is to us all the while."

With that God's help, he would make life all sunshine to her; he could not go away thus; he hungered to hear those quivering lips say: "Max, I love you." He would hear it.

"Delphine."

"Ah! You naughty, naughty girl. What a fright mamma has been in about you. Do you suppose she can always guess where you are? Monsieur Max, you must scold her for me; she is turning nut-brown as a gypsy. Be kind and bring the giddy thing to the shore," rang sharply and shrilly out to them from the shore.

Cursing the malicious fate which had dogged him and thwarted him through all that day, Max turned the boat's prow in the direction of the voice.

"You naughty girl. A pretty account I was able just now to give of you to poor, anxious Monsieur Samuels, who sat so patiently waiting for you to come in."

"Mr. Samuels," said Delphine, looking at her mother with grave surprise, "I parted with him not twenty minutes ago."

Mrs. Staunton flushed slightly; then, with the audacity of an adept, she recovered herself.

"So he told me, adding, poor fellow, that he had gone to meet you, with the self-avowed determination to ask you some very serious questions; had not found the occasion quite propitious, so had left you, but could not rest tonight without seeing you alone. I do not hesitate to speak of these little family matters before Monsieur Max, because he is quite one of us. I have appointed to-morrow for Monsieur Samuels's return."

Delphine's face was crimsoned up to the roots of her hair; she blushed for the knowledge that her mother had—

lied! But no words came from her in reply.

Max, watching her keenly, but furtively, saw the blush, and cursed the folly that had made him think this bright-browed girl could possibly come to love him; plain, grave, not young, when there was a "violet-eyed" suitor pleading for that dear little hand.

He would not return to the house; he already feared he should miss the train. He bade Delphine good-by there in the presence of her mother, leaving the child in tears; but the mother, radiant with victory.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MR. SAMUELS PRESCRIBES.

"It is medicine, not poison, I offer you."—*Lessing*.

"I will teach her the litany of moral truth. I will try to make her brave and strong." And right well had Eleanor Morgan kept the promise made to the dying lover of her youth. For in that trying period of her life, immediately succeeding the uprooting of the old ties, when the girl's heart was left bare and quivering, its lacerated fibres reaching out helplessly for new supports, but finding none, had it not been for the strong, pure, healthful principles of living inculcated by wise Eleanor, the new life must have gone much harder with her than it did.

When a resistless power lays low the stately edifice of a man's projected future out in the broad glare of the world's highway, innumerable hands beckon him on to a renewal of hope and endeavor. But when a woman's castle comes tumbling about her ears, walled in by propriety's prickly hedge, confined to the beaten path of "her sphere," the poor alternative of sullen submission or the substitution of the husks of contentment for the full ear of fruition, is all that lies before her.

Sullen submission was not consonant with Delphine's brightly-healthful mental constitution. Therefore, the husks of contentment must be her portion.

Max gone! Eleanor an object of fierce jealousy to her mother—that mother day by day giving herself up more completely to a slothful seclusion. The girl stood sadly alone. No one to share her daily life with; no one to whom she

could pour out all her budding theories and notions about people and things. She was at that age, when the mind is most dependant upon another and a stronger mind, just venturing upon flights into the realms of thought; poised timorously upon the verge of the known; leaning yearningly towards the shadowy regions of the unknown.

In such a case, what more natural than that the lonely girl should be seen almost daily seeking the enjoyable companionship of the parsonage? They were all good and kind to her there, and in the Rev. Mr. Samuels she was always sure to find a ready listener and an able adviser.

Her mother had told her that Mr. Samuels was to come again that day. Should he come, she would tell him of all her worries and perplexities.

Mrs. Staunton saw her daughter at the dinner-table for the first time on the day succeeding Mr. Morgan's departure.

"Mother, did I not understand you that you had appointed this morning for Mr Samuels to come here again?" asked Delphine, after dutifully and formally inquiring into the condition of her mother's nerves.

"This morning—Mr. Samuels—y-e-e-s—well, really, my dear child, I am not quite sure. When did I see your Monsieur of the violet-eyes? Come, help mamma to remember."

Not unfrequently did Delphine doubt her mother's complete restoration to sanity. Never, of her own wonderful patience.

"Did you not tell me when you called me in from the bayou that he had been here?"

"Did I? Possibly. I had to manufacture something on the spur of the moment, for the sake of your reputation."

"My reputation?" repeats the daughter, wonderingly.

"Yes, my poor ignorant child, your reputation. In France, where girls are raised as they should be, no young lady of any pretensions to gentility, could behave as you behave with that bold eyed Monsieur Max, and escape censure."

"Mother, stop! Put your strange hints into plain language. I am not good at guessing people's meaning."

"Mine needs no guessing. I did not think it proper for my daughter to be

alone with a young man, as you were with your Monsieur Max, and I called you to me."

She had opened a new page in the book of life before the pure eyes of the child.

"Not proper. I do not wonder at the close espionage you say your French girls are kept under. I fancy they must need it. But as for me, mother, don't make it too hard for me to treat you with proper respect."

A disagreeable laugh, full of scornful levity, grated harshly upon the girl's overwrought feelings. And this mocker was her mother!

"Child, you weary me with your heroics. Have done and learn to take life pleasantly. You will be old before your years of conquest arrive."

"But about Mr. Samuels?" says the persistent child.

"Ah! Bahl! Your Mr. Samuels, I know nothing about. I have not seen him. I hope not to see him."

"But mother, you said he had been here."

"Yes. Some excuse for calling you in I had to manufacture, and that was as good as another. There, I have no appetite left for my dinner, and one needs to bring the digestive apparatus of an ostrich to bear upon Mrs. Jeremiah's cookery."

Delphine waited no longer for the minister to keep the appointment he had never made. Immediately upon leaving the table, she whistled Blucher to her side, and set off for the parsonage.

"I knew I should find you all doing something or other. Do you ever stop being busy under this roof?"

"Indeed do we," answers the young pastor, placing a chair for her always-welcome self, near the table at which he was at work upon the dismembered mantel clock.

"I mean ever besides when you are asleep."

"I should dislike very much to keep count of all our idle moments. We would lose in our own estimation as well as in yours. But tell me what favor my little book found in your eyes."

"Oh!" A compunctious pair of eyes and remorsefully clasped hands supplement her not very satisfactory reply."

"Which means," says Mr. Samuels, "that the wrappings have not been ta-

ken off it yet. I suppose I ought to be angry." But his bright smile shows he is not.

"You would not be, if you knew how much I have had to distress me since you gave it to me."

"Distress. May not your friend and your pastor help you bear it?"

"Mr. Samuels," she says very suddenly, holding out to him her two little hands, "tell me what to do with these useless things?"

"Your gloves?" asked the young pastor, his glance travelling from the small hands, up to their moody-browed owner, with marked surprise in them.

"No; my two good-for-nothing hands. They are as idle as those two clock-hands on the table corner."

"And like those same clock-hands just need a little regulating, to make them altogether indispensable within certain limits."

"That is just what I have come to you for."

"To be regulated?"

"Yes, to be regulated. Will you undertake the task?"

"I will undertake to assist you in the task."

"But I am afraid you will have to take my whole moral mechanism as completely apart as you have your mother's mantel clock. It must be put together wrong."

"I have no slur to cast upon the maker of my mantel-clock. It has been marred by clumsier hands."

"Then you are angry. I did not know my flippant simile conveyed any slur upon my maker. I did not mean that it should. Is that apology enough?"

"More than your words or myself demanded. But, do you really come to me for me to prescribe for idleness?"

"I really do."

"I have had some work cut out for you for a long time, waiting for this very moment."

"How did you know it would ever come?"

"I had good reason to believe it would, and you have not disappointed me. Thank you."

"For what, Mr. Samuels?"

"For being true to yourself."

"But where is my work?"

"Right at your own door."

"My door?"

"Yes. I want you to assist me in ame-

liorating the condition of your own slaves."

"Is there anything wrong in the place? There are but few. But I have always thought they were well treated in every respect. I shall inquire into it."

"They are excellently well treated in all but one respect."

"And that is?"

"Your total indifference to their moral welfare."

"Moral welfare," repeated the young mistress, slowly; the words seemed to have a queer sound about them. Red flannel shirts in winter and mosquito-bars in summer were *sine qua non*s where the physical welfare was concerned. But how should she go about taking care of their moral welfare.

"What can I do, Mr. Samuels?"

"You can visit them, read to them, instruct them."

"Visit them?"

"I think I would."

"But their cabins are so dirty."

"Your presence would be an inducement to greater cleanliness."

"And read to them? They are so stupid and ignorant they could not understand one word."

"All the more need for your instruction."

Delphine sat very quiet for a little while. This was not just the work those dainty hands would have chosen. She even doubted its being a wise undertaking. Mr. Samuels watched her very intently, as she sat there pondering his suggestion. He believed he knew how sore-pressed this young soul was. Believed that, to bring her entirely out of herself, suddenly and completely, into contemplating lots of greater hardship and sadder ordering than her own, would be wise and kind.

One of Delphine Staunton's greatest charms was that rare sweet humility which is sometimes united with the haughtiest pride. Where she trusted, she was as docile as a little child. She trusted this gentle browed young pastor believed that of such was the kingdom of Heaven; and after a short period of self-communing, she turned towards him her beautiful face radiant with high resolve.

"I will do as you want me. Tell me how to begin, I called my poor servants stupid and ignorant, when I am so terribly so myself."

"I will not tell you how to begin; I will begin with you. We will make the first visit together."

"You are always better than one dares hope you will be; you have taken all the terror away from it, and I thank you so sincerely."

Allowing herself just a margin of daylight for her homeward walk, she gave herself completely up to the gentle soothing influences that permeated the very atmosphere of the little parsonage.

Mr. Samuels followed up his suggestion very promptly, wisely fearing that the resolve born of enthusiasm, might weaken and die under chilling deliberation.

Saturday evening found him on his way to the homestead, well supplied with sundry brightly illumined cards, in which the decalogue displayed all the rain-bow tints.

"Are you ready?" he asks of Delphine as soon as she makes her appearance.

"Yes," she answers with a gasp, such as one might be pardoned with the dentist's chair in view, and then they leave the house on their mission.

"Yonders white folks comin'." The announcement speeds along the line of rolling, tumbling, greasy-faced, happy little darkeys, whose glistering teeth and white eye-balls are turned in pleased greeting towards 'Missy.'

"Let us stop at old Margery's first," Delphine suggests. "She is one of the old family servants, and disagreeable as I find it to enter the quarters, I have paid her several visits."

Gently disturbing with the tip of his cane an ill-mannered pig, who seemed disinclined to show "white folks" the civility of retreating before them, and rapping two yellow curs smartly over the head with the same useful article, Mr. Samuels finally cleared a way for Delphine into old Margery's cabin.

A stool and a hide-bottom chair were hastily wiped off, and placed in as clean a spot as could be commanded on such short notice, for "quality folks."

"How have you been, Aunt Margery, since your last attack? Any more rheumatism?"

"Now a little better'n, now a little worsen, honey; thank de Lord for all his blessin's."

"You are still unable to leave the house, I suppose."

"Bless de Lam'! Yes, child, I doubten if this nigger'll ever see de blessed sun shinin' ag'in."

"Would you like me to come every day, to read to you awhile, Aunt Margery?"

"Read, child? Wha' for honey? Larnin's a good thing for such like's you an' de parson yer; but for this ole nigger, Bless God, chile, a plug'er t'baccer'd do me sight more good."

"But you might have the tobacco and the reading, too, Margery," Mr. Samuels suggests.

"Yas, sir; yas, Mars Parson, I'se not say nothin' ag'in your books. Bless de Lam', I'se willin' to listen as long as Missy you'er's ready to read. But when I feels like nothin' more'n a bundle of aches, seems like a good chaw t'baccer's mighty soothin' like."

"I will bring you some the next time I come. And now I want to leave you something pretty to look at."

Delphine slips from the big envelope on her lap a gaily illumined card, which warns Margery in golden letters that she "shalt not steal."

"Please God, that's purty, sho!" Margery says, holding out her rheumatic hand with child-like eagerness, for the "purty pickcher."

"And it has a meaning, Aunt Margery." Then the pretty lay minister, blushing a little (because, although he has kindly gone out to the door, where the little darkeys, and the pigs, and the yellow curs, are all tumbling over each other in democratic enjoyment of dirt and equality, she feels sure that the real minister will not lose a word of this, her maiden effort), explains the gilt lettering, and with it for a text, preaches a very creditable extempore sermon.

Old Margery listens in rapt attention, interpolating the missionary's remarks with a mumbling succession of "Yes, Lord! Bless de Lam'! Sweet Jesus!" much to the confusion of the novice, who felt a wicked desire to laugh at Margery herself and the real minister.

"And now, Margery, I am going to hang this just here, over your mantel-piece, where you can look up at it all the time, and not forget what the card says."

"To be sure, chile."

Delphine tip-toes to attain her object, and from her upreaching hands, her fresh white handkerchief slips unno-

ticed, and flutters to chair-ridden Margery's feet.

"Tell me ag'in, chile, jis what the good card says;" and Margery struggles to her feet, with the aid of her cane, to stand close by Delphine's side.

"Thou shalt not steal," says the young lady very solemnly. "You must remember the words, and teach them to your children and your grand-children, Aunt Margery."

"Bless de Lam'! Yes, honey."

"And tell them that a long time ago God came down from Heaven on purpose to give that command, together with nine other ones, to people here on earth."

"I wonder."

"And that he is very, very angry when people forget his commandments."

"Sweet Jesus! yes, honey."

"Now I must be going. I shall come every Saturday evening, Aunt Margery, and bring my Bible with me."

"And de t'baccer, dear honey, don't forget that. This old nigger's in rale need of some, sartin, sho."

Then Delphine joins Mr. Samuels without, and they pick their way to the next cabin.

"As they disappear from view, Margery hobbles a step or two backwards to her chair, stoops quickly, and possesses herself of the dainty cambric handkerchief dropped by the lay preacher.

"Purty, sho! Got any name?" deftly the black fingers travel round the snowy hem-stitched border. "Good luck, no—hi, Ma, you'se in luck today! This nigger can hole up her head, now, wid de bes of 'em at the nex' funeral," with which Delphine's white handkerchief disappears within some mysterious receptacle under her chair seat.

"Dow shilt not steal! 'Dow shilt not steal! Them's good words, an' de nex' time I cetch that good-fur nothin', trillin' boun', Bob, in my 'tater patch, I'll fotch him in yer, an' see ef I can't shame some sense inter 'im."

In the course of another hour or two Mr. Samuels and his assistant had paid a short visit to each cabin, and ornamented each mantel-shelf with one of their cards; had lectured a wife-beater on cruelty; delivered themselves of various and sundry exhortations to cleanliness; and turned them about to return to the house.

"I have never shown you my new

path, have I?" asked Delphine, brightening up at the prospect of leaving behind her her uninviting field of labor. "Let us go back to the house by it. I did not know the old place could boast such a pretty nook."

Nothing loath, Mr. Samuels followed her lead, and soon found himself in an entirely unfamiliar portion of the forest which surrounded the homestead.

Side by side, the two walked along the wooded path, the girl feeling fresher, for the bare effort at usefulness; the minister placidly happy, because she was there by his side.

"Well, does your new work promise any attraction?"

"It promises distraction, which is what I most need and desire."

"May I not—"

"Hush!" With uplifted hand Delphine motions him to silence. Voices, as of two persons conversing in carefully modulated tones are plainly heard. "I thought this path was all my own. I resent its discovery and use by others. I wonder who these intruders can be?" she says almost in a whisper to her companion.

"We shall soon know."

Half a dozen more steps and they stood in the presence of Mrs. Staunton and M. Emile Girardeau, seated side by side upon a fallen log; and so intent was the young man in listening to the earnest but rapid harangue of the lady, that Delphine's icy "Mother!" was the first intimation they had of an interruption.

"You bad girl! I spend half my time wandering about, hunting you up. Mrs. Staunton rallies quickly from the evident confusion her daughter's appearance has thrown her into.

"I am sorry you should have been so inconvenient." With a haughty bow to M. Girardeau, she waits for her mother to join herself and Mr. Samuels on their return walk.

When the minister leaves her for the evening he wishes he dared put into words of some sort his yearning desire to comfort her. But she has withdrawn into herself, since that meeting with her mother, and is so haughtily cold and repellant, that he dares only venture upon a fervent "God bless you," while holding one of those useless but "pretty little hands."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE RECORD OF A WEEK.

"I have heard of reasons manifold
Why love must needs be blind,
But this the best of all I hold—
His eyes are in his mind."

—*Southey*

"A diary, Max! Not one of those stupidly conscientious records of how often one has gotten up in the morning, and washed one's face and eaten one's breakfast, which you and I used to laugh to scorn. I am sending you simply an account of my daily doings, because you have written me that the most uneventful matter relating to my welfare will be of interest to you, and I know you are sincere in all your utterances."

"At one setting and upon a very small piece of paper, I could easily tell you everything, but it is pleasant to feel one's self constantly en rapport with those one loves; so, in spite of the poor opinion we both entertain of young ladies' diaries, you will have to wade through one every week or two."

("There, now, I will never receive the credit due me, for that brave beginning. But why should I burden him with troubles he is utterly powerless to lighten? Dear Max, it will please him to think I am cheerful and contented,") whereupon, the brave diarist recorded her:

"Monday—After all my sneers I cannot see that I have much to record outside the getting up, face-washing, and breakfast-eating achievements. Walked over to the parsonage in the evening, from there to the church, to take an organ lesson from Mr. Samuels, (he plays beautifully.)"

"Tuesday—I open my diary (which is nothing in the world, Max, but the identical sheet of fool's-cap you are looking at this minute), with more pleasure than usual, for something has been kind enough to happen. My uncle, Father Richards, arrived here yesterday. He is to spend several days with us. I adore him! He is so stately, so learned, so gentle, and talks to one about one oneself, and one's tiniest worries, with such bewitching kindness and fascinating earnestness, that I no longer wonder at the influence these holy men wield. My mother has been a different woman ever since his arrival. No devotee was ever more zealously awake to her religious duties. Surely, the church which can mould such men as my uncle Richards; the religion which can stir such sluggish natures as my mother's to ardent devotion; the belief which can reconcile lonely men and

women to long lives of utter self-abnegation and beautiful usefulness, must be the one true, vital church. I am so tired, Max, of churches one has to take care of; I want a church that will take care of me. I love to hear my uncle tell me of the lives of the gentle sisters and nuns. I wonder if I am too wicked to ever make one. Who would care? Who would miss me, if I buried myself alive, and was resurrected in one of those stiff, white scoops under the name of Sister Agatha, or sister something-or-other-else?" (There, my Tuesday is trenching on dangerous ground. No one talks about nunneries and that sort of thing, when they are making believe to be very, very happy.)"

"Wednesday—Nothing new. Uncle Richards still here, although Mother Danbury has done her very best to disgust him with this locality. Nothing can induce that sincere Christian, but small-souled Protestant, that a Catholic priest ever does, or ever should, enjoy any of this world's cheer. She has fed us on fish since he has been staying with us, until I absolutely feel funny. Poor Dan! She has kept him going with his basket and rods until he told her despairingly that he really believed he had exhausted the supply in the bayou, and now she has fallen back on mackerel and salt herring. It is awful. I honestly think I could swim without a shadow of fear or difficulty."

"Mr. Samuels and Lucy walked over this evening. It was well worth sitting quietly by, while two such men as my uncle Richards and our gentle 'St. Paul' discussed dogmas with a rare freedom from dogmatism."

"After all, I believe the church which moulded Mr. Samuels, so wise, so gentle, so full of Christian charity, must do its work well, too."

"Thursday—Did nothing all day, by reason of a bad headache in the morning, a bad temper at noon, and a bad fit of the sulks all evening. Father Richards leaves for Wickam tomorrow. I shall avail myself of his escort, to pay dear Nance and Evy a visit. Have not seen my dear parsonage friends today."

"Saturday night—(a hiatus, which is something orderly young persons never admit into their diaries) I am back from Wickam. Do you ask me if I had a pleasant visit? I say no! Do you ask if I am sorry I went? I say no again. Do you ask if I am not in a somewhat unreasonable way? Still, I say no, as persistently and monotonously as that stupid child, who could say nothing but we are seven to every interrogatory."

"My visit was bitter-sweet, sorrowfully-glad, pleasurably-painful, or anything else paradoxical you may choose to imagine."

"I missed someone at every turn. I missed you most sadly of all, dear Max. Was it your presence that used make the rooms look

larger and airier and brighter than they did yesterday? Was it your being there that made the garden-walks, and the flower-beds, and the climbers, all look like bits of Eden's unappreciated garden? How else explain the disappointing feeling at every turn? The garden-walks were so much gravel and 'stars of Bethlehem,' nothing more. The flower-beds were full of thorny roses and bold-eyed dahlias; the climbers clambered in ungraceful fashion, as if they, too, missed a certain strong kindly hand, always ready to help the weak, to guide the erring. Maybe, after all, things looked poorer and smaller and meaner, because I have grown older. I have heard old people talk of how things narrowed, as the moral vision expanded, which makes me sorry to think I shall ever grow old or expand morally."

"I missed my gallant Cousin Paul. I have always thought that dashing cousin of mine was born in the wrong era. He belongs to the age of chivalry, where his gay courage, his gently courtesy, his irrepressible manliness, would have had fuller scope and appreciation. I think he would look so very much more in place in one of the Waverly Novels, than in Wickam."

"But he no longer belongs to Wickam. I found Aunt Catherine and Uncle Weyland alone, and though they carry it bravely, the loneliness hurts them (as who does it not, Max.) When I asked for Paul, Uncle Weyland, answering jocularly (he was never known to answer any other way), said that Wickam had grown too small for Paul, or Paul too large for Wickam; he was not quite certain which, and that he had left the parent nest on half-devised wings, to try broader fields. But the boy is right; if a young man wants to succeed, he must get him away from his birth-place, where he will never be anything but 'that boy' to such scores of people who have 'dandled him on their knees,' that the fact of his having ever acquired the accomplishment of walking becomes matter of marvel."

"And I missed poor Cousin Gus (who is it no adjective but 'poor' ever suggests itself in connection with certain people), not that he was so inaccessible, for I did see him in the evening at home—I mean at your house. But he has become a wonderful business man. They say Mr. Lonsdale entertains the best opinion of him, and holds out promises of preferment, which will be of immense benefit to him. Aunt Maria looks happier, owing, I suppose, to the great and marked improvement in Gus. Susie is getting a sour look about her, and a tart way with her, not pleasant to behold. I wonder does the milk of human kindness ever turn to honny-clabber? Mr. Samuels over this evening."

Sunday—Max, my Sundays are all spoiled now-a-days. They would be perfect if I

could walk quietly through the woods to church, listen to one of Mr. Samuels's short, pleasant sermons, and back home, to do just as I please with the balance of the day. But this I cannot do."

"It is but natural that my mother should feel great pleasure in M. Girardeau's society, both of them from the same country, and isolated in their nationality. But she has taken a great fancy to have him of Sundays to dine, until it has almost become a matter of course. You have never yet seen 'my Frenchman,' as they all persist in calling him. He is a most remarkably changed man. If I were sentimentally inclined, I should say that he was pining away under some hopeless attachment. That some great and secret burden oppresses him, seems very plain.

Mr. Samuels, with his ever quick sympathies, has been very kind indeed to him, and if he cannot comfort no mortal can. I suppose I am very wicked not to feel glad that he can find any solace in my mother's company. But all the same, I do not like to see him come. And that is the way my Sundays are all spoiled now-a-days."

("Tomorrow, I shall seal and despatch this. I wonder if he remembers the sermon he preached me upon useless repining? You will never know, Max, how hard I have found it not to write down one or two wails. I think I am progressing rapidly in the noble art of repression.")

And did he remember his sermon upon useless repining? I doubt it. For as he pored hungrily over this week's diary of Delphine's, noting carefully the brightness of the wording, the absence of all girlish petulance, the serenity of the written record, proved strangely enough, so many irritants.

She has grown reconciled to the new life quickly. The new hopes and new plans are springing up luxuriantly. Scarcely a day's record, omits the "violet-eyed minister." "Well, I repeat it. Well, I am glad, or, to confine myself more strictly to veracity, I ought to be glad. But—bah! I begin to doubt Europe's curative properties and my own common sense."

So, with all his getting, Mr. Morzan had not gotten wisdom. Else, he would have drawn the largest amount of comfort from the very freedom with which the diarist handled the minister's name.

But, at thirty (according to Young), man only suspects himself a fool—knows it at forty—therefore, Max, strong, clear-headed, reasonable in all matters but in his love for this "Queen of Hearts," must be granted several years of grace."

CHAPTER XXIX.

A CRISIS IN TWO LIVES.

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or knows his deserts small,
Who dares not put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all."

—Montrose.

Mr. Timothy Lonsdale, banker, awoke one morn'g to find himself robbed! Not caring to find himself famous, also (for after all, what is fame but a fine name for notoriety?) he kept his trouble to himself; no one beside the watchman of the bank being aware until after closing hours that the big safe in the banker's private office had been tampered with.

When, as Mr. Ames, Jr., was drawing on his gloves, in preparation for his homeward walk, the watchman brought him a message from his employer.

"Mr. Lonsdale would like to see Mr. Ames in his private office."

Augustus replaced his hat and gloves and followed the messenger into the banker's own apartment, the green baize door of which swung noiselessly to, shutting the three men within walls which had no ears.

Mr. Lonsdale was sitting at his desk, upon the lid of which was scattered in a confusion only equaled by the frenzied disorder of his short-cut gray hair, heaps of papers, to which he was rapidly adding still other heaps, dragged out from their long repose in the recesses of the iron safe, standing open at his elbow.

He turned a face full of anxiety on Augustus as he came and stood near him.

"Ames, I have been robbed!"

"Robbed, sir?"

"Robbed."

"The vault? I thought it impregnable."

"Not the vault, the safe. Money gone—Mrs. Lonsdale's jewels and still more valuable papers."

Augustus expressed his surprise and distress, then waited anxiously to hear why he had been selected for the master's confidence on this occasion.

Mr. Lonsdale turned abruptly upon the watchman.

"Tell Mr. Ames all you know about this matter."

"Yes, sir. You know, Mr. Ames, what a sharp creature for a bark my little terrier 'Vizen' is. I always keeps her

here with me at night, so that when I'm a watchin' round about the vault way, she can keep guard over this room and the safe. What could agot into the creature last night, beats my time. I left her here jus' as usual, when I was goin' my rounds—was gone maybe something like half an hour—come back leisurlike, allowing that 'twas all right inside; being, you see, Vixen had made no noise, when, please God, as I opened that door, the very door you and me came through just now (you know it opens very easy like), right here, kneelin' down, jus' so, the safe open an' a dark lantern throwin' its light inside of it, was a man, so busy like over his rascally stealin' that he never heard me come in. Drawin' quick and cockin' my pistol in less time by a jugful than its took to tell you all this, I was just about to give it to him, when, without leave or license, he gave one big bound and was up in the open window. I blazed away at him anyway, and give him the best in the shop; then I jumped to the window, but if witches had switched him out of sight on broomsticks, he couldn't 'a cleared himself no quicker.

"Where was Vixen all that time?"

"Blast her! Layin' under the master's big leather chair, as quiet as if it'd been one of the bank folks themselves, about their own lawful business."

"How do you account for her behavior?"

"I don't undertake to account for it at all, sir. It's a plaguy strange business all round," answered the watchman, scratching his head viciously, as perplexed people are prone to do when their heads prove unequal to the occasion.

"You may go now, John. I will discuss this matter further with Mr. Ames. But remember, sir, that your continuance in your present place depends upon your complete silence in this matter. One word to anyone outside of this room, and you will look for another employer."

"I'll remember, sir;" with which John was gone and Augustus alone with the banker.

"And now, Mr. Ames, you are wondering, perhaps, what you have to do with this matter."

Augustus acknowledged his anxiety.

"I am depending upon you, sir, to discover the thief, and restore my property."

"I, Mr. Lonsdale? I detect the thief? Why, I would not know how to start about it even. Why not put it in the hands of the proper police authorities?"

"Because this matter *must not become public*."

"And why? Since you have honored me with your confidence, sir, I presume I may ask that question."

"I told you that my greatest loss was a box of valuable papers."

"Yes, sir."

"They were papers relating altogether to family matters."

"Then whom could they benefit?"

"But one person alive."

"And that one person?"

"My own nephew."

"Percy Lonsdale! Our gentlemanly cashier!"

"So I fear. And this is why, Ames, that this matter must be handled with gloves."

"But the grounds for your suspicions? The whole thing sounds so monstrous to me."

"And it is monstrous. I have cared for that boy as for my own child. But he comes of a bad stock, Ames—a bad stock by the mother's side. The grounds for my suspicion are these. Those papers would benefit no one but Percy. No one but he was aware of their being in that safe. Yesterday, only, he requested and obtained ten days leave of absence to visit a married sister in Simsbury. The dog's remarkable quietness points to the fact that she knew the thief was some one who belonged about the premises. Percy has left town. Find out for me who has robbed me, Ames, above all things, recover that box of papers and a junior partnership in the bank is yours!"

Vision of a junior partnership, which meant position, ease, Lucy, happiness, passed before Augustus's eyes in a bright-hued panorama. He was silent from very excess of gratitude.

"You hesitate. You are right. Always consider well every proposition made you. There is both difficulty and danger in the undertaking. You are entirely at liberty to refuse, if you wish to."

"I was not silent from hesitation. Your offer suggested a train of thought irrelevant to our business. I will undertake this thing, not promising success, for I will be trying but a 'prentice hand

at the detective business, but promising to leave undone nothing which ought to insure success."

"Thank you. The contents of this pocket-book I think you will find ample for your travelling expenses. If not, write to me for more."

"Have you any especial directions for my guidance, sir?"

"None, my boy. I trust you; you are a gentleman. You will be discreet. My nephew left Wickam to visit his married sister, Mrs. Dangertield, of Simsport. Good-by and God bless you," The banker dismissed him with a cordial clasp of the hand, and Augustus turned himself homeward, to find his mother alert and anxious at his unusual tardiness.

That Mr. Lonsdale was sending him away on important business connected with the bank, was all that he considered it necessary to impart to his family.

Mrs. Ames prepared his small valise with as much care and attention to her boy's wants as if he were about to cross the briny ocean for a year's absence.

The first train which left Wickam after Mr. Lonsdale's interview with Augustus, left it with that young gentleman aboard in the novel character of an amateur detective.

Simsport was not his immediate destination. In the few hours he had had for contemplating the subject of his errand, it had occurred to him that legal advice as to his own course in the matter was almost necessary to his success. But the whole affair was to be conducted with so much secrecy that to obtain such advice was in itself a point for very delicate action.

He would stop over and see Paul, and consult him confidentially. The "old fellow" was fast making a name.

He felt quite sure he should find him equal to giving the advice he was in need of.

The meeting between the cousins was full of happy cordiality. There was so much to tell of touching their new lives—so much to ask about touching the old. Then Augustus comes to the business which has brought about this pleasant meeting, pledging Paul first to the secrecy of the confessional.

Business discussed and disposed of with a happy facility which belongs only to the arrogant years of early manhood, Paul, in his turn, pledges Augustus to the secrecy of the confession, and divulges that

early on the morrow he is to leave his law office for a few days to go down to the Lodge for convenience sake only.

"The truth is," says the Judge's son, "I think I have a right now to ask the girl I love some very searching questions, and to have them answered, too."

"The girl you love," says Augustus, feeling sick and faint. What chance would he have if Paul should go back there with his handsome face and his winning voice and his budding fame? Then he thought of the package of gently kind letters he was carrying along with him, and took heart of grace."

"Yes," Paul resumes, "I believe we were all rather soft about that time on Miss Samuels. You and Girardeau and I. But I've seen no one yet to compare with her. And, as I don't care to remain dangling any longer between Heaven and earth, I am going down to put the matter to the test, and win or lose it all. I hope, before I return, to get things in trim."

"In trim?" You are not engaged to Lucy Samuels, are you, Paul?"

"No; but that is just what I want to become."

"Have you ever spoken to her on the subject?"

"On what subject?"

"Of your love."

"In hints and sighs, and spooney insinuations, yes. Scores of times just nearing the subject close enough to find out that I was not absolutely obnoxious to her. Upon which I have rested contented, until I could go to her like a man, and tell her I was ready to support her comfortably, if she would be my wife."

"And you are going to her to say that now?"

"I am, as fast as steam can carry me."

Then Augustus asked no more questions. It was hard, just as the chance of the bank partnership was offered him, and he, too, was looking forward to the near prospect of going to Lucy like a man, to tell her that he was ready to support her comfortably, if she would be his wife, to have Paul step in before him, and carry off the prize; the hope of winning which had been his inspiration now for so many months of heroic self-control and praiseworthy effort. And yet, how could he reconcile his duty to his employer, with his longing to turn aside and have his own fate decided by this yellow-haired arbiter? Twenty-four

hours could surely make no great difference in Mr. Lonedale's business, and might alter a life for him. He would go with Paul. He would not tell him why, for this girl-worship of his shunned the light; it was sacred—too nearly akin to a religion to be gossiped about, even with Paul. She did not belong to Paul yet. He had a right to adore her, to kneel to her, to plead for the blessing of her love, and he would do it, too. Poor heart, how little of its fancied security could he call to his aid, in the presence of that splendid cousin. What would the bank partnership be to him, if Lucy said "no" to him, and "yes" to Paul? What would life itself be with his inspiration gone? When he spoke again his voice sounded troubled.

"Paul, I believe I will go as far as the Homestead with you. My business cannot suffer by the delay of twenty-four hours."

"Why not to the Lodge? We will reach the Lodge by dinner tomorrow, and then ride over in the evening to the Homestead; spend the night with our kin, and the next day—well, who knows what the next day may hold in store for us?"

"Who, indeed, but One who holds our fates in the hollow of his hand," Augustus replies, with a solemnity at which he smiles himself presently.

CHAPTER XXX.

AUGUSTUS AMES MAKES HIS MARK.

"Ye gods, it doth amaze me,
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world,
And bear the palm alone."

—*Shakespeare.*

When Augustus Ames rode out through the Lodge gates, late the next evening, side by side with Paul, who sat his prancing gray with the easy grace of a lusty young centaur, his eyes rested upon him admiringly, but sadly. There was not a shadow of bitterness or of envy in his heart against this gallant cousin of his. Only the wings of the hope upon which he had been soaring so surely, so loftily, drooped heavily.

Paul had always been on the winning side. What hope was there that his faithful ally, "good luck," would fail him now?

Mrs. Staunton, Delphine, Emile Girar-

deau, Mr. Samuels, all came under friendly discussion as they rode slowly along by the hedges that flung their crimson-berried arms far out to meet them, by the long rows of white-washed cabins, from whose chimneys curled the blue smoke, that hinted of suppers in the course of preparation, by the homeward bound teams, heaped high with snowy banks of cotton; then into the shadows and the darkness and the gloom of the woodland; her name only was not spoken.

Gradually, as the shades thickened, they grew more silent, until a spell of dumbness seized upon them both.

"Hush!" It is Paul who draws rein suddenly, and commands silence when no man speaketh.

As motionless as two equestrian statues they remain until it comes again.

A low, prolonged, quivering groan of mortal anguish!

"It is over there to the right, ahead of us," and Paul spurs forward.

"It is here, just at hand; wait!"

It comes again, lower, more tremulous, less prolonged, a feeble wail from suffering humanity. Following the sound until the faint glisten of water told them that they were close upon the bayou's banks, the cousins dismounted hastily, tethered their horses to a tree, and groped their way forward through the briery undergrowth.

"There! I see him! It is a man! God for a light!" and Augustus, closely followed by Paul, stood over the prostrate form of a man, lying near by the water's edge, a battered tin cup clinched in his hand, showing how he had vainly striven to reach out for the water, running so close by his helpless, craving lips.

For a moment the groans ceased, then a voice, hoarse from suffering, asks: "Is it you, boys?"

"It is some one to help you, if you will tell us how you are hurt, that we may know what to do first," Augustus says, taking the lead of Paul for the first time in a life-time. "Who are you?"

"A dying man!"

"No, don't think it. We have come to help you. Tell us how you are injured, so that we may know what to be about."

"It's no go. I know by your voices you're young, by your wordin' you're gentlemen. You're in danger here, best leave. There's nothin' you

kin do for me. I'm about to hand in my checks, and if the parsons are right, a thunderin' reckonin's awaitin' for me. But I'll do one good turn to my fellerman before I do go, and that's to warn you young chaps out of these woods. It ain't safe. If my pals should happen back right now, 'twouldn't be good for your wholesome. There, I've warned you. It's the first half-way good thing I've done in a score of evil years. I wonder if they'll scratch out one of the black marks again' me up yonder in the big book?" The excitement of feverish delirium sounded in his voice. For a while his physical sufferings had lulled. Then with a shudder and a groan the poor wretch writhed within its returning throes.

"Paul! Surely you have matches; a light we must have!"

Gathering together a heap of leaves and sticks, while Paul searched his pockets for a match, the first faint flicker of a blaze was struggling into existence, when a heavy hand was flung on the heap, and once more they were enveloped in total darkness.

"Fools!" gasped the prostrate man. "By the God I used to pray to, you shan't be lightin' the boys this way. I'm not just where they left me, for I thought I'd die for a drink of cold water, and I've drug myself many a yard to get to this water; but they'll find me; there's honor 'mong thieves, and the boys will come back for me. We never forsakes our pals in trouble. Ef it'd been their luck, 'stead of mine, to be shot by that cursed watchman, I'd a stuck to 'em, by God, I'd a stuck to 'em, and they'll stick to me."

"Where are your friends?"

"Out yonder in the woods a-burying of the cursed shinin' stones and the tin box, that looks now like mighty poor pay for a bullet-hole."

"The bank box!" Augustus hisses the word into Paul's ear, fastening a savage grip on his coat lappel.

"What can we do? Only two of us, and there may be a dozen of them," Paul whispers back.

Augustus stoops once more to the wounded burglar.

"We wish to help you. Have you friends enough out yonder in the woods to carry a litter to the next house? We cannot leave you out here to die."

"Go. The boys'll take care of me.

They'll come back. They're only two, but they are strong and true. Get away from here, I tell you. You're young, both of you. Most likes you've got mothers to love you, and cry over you. I had one myself once, but I broke her heart and sent her to Heaven, where there's a small chance of my ever gettin' to see her agin. But I tell you to go! I'm usin' about the last breath in a good-for-nothin' body, to tell you to go." Once more groans of mortal agony impeded his utterance.

"There are but two out yonder! Mount your horse and gallop for help. They must be secured," Augustus's voice sounds stern and commanding, as he gives Paul his orders in a rapid undertone.

"And leave you here alone?"

"Gods! Why waste time talking?" with fierce impatience; "yes, you have heard him say they will have to search for him; there is plenty of time. Go! My own fate is wavering in the balance."

"You go, Gus, and let me watch."

"Paul! You are snatching fortune from my grasp. You know these woods; I do not. You are a better rider and have a better horse. Go! If you have one particle of affection for me, do as I bid you for this once. I must stay to treasure up every scrap of evidence that falls from his lips."

"I'll go, then, and God grant I am doing the right thing, and take care of you."

The clattering of his horse's hoofs aroused the wounded man once more.

"They're gone! Thank mother's God for that much."

"One of us is gone," said Augustus, kneeling down by his side, "the other will remain until help comes, so that you can be removed."

"One still here? Young man, does it happen you are a parson?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"You hold your life so light, you ought to be. Is there nothing very dear to you that you'd like to look upon again?"

Augustus shuddered. "Yes, many. One dearer than all the rest, who would never forgive me if I deserted a dying man."

"A sweetheart? I had one once—my Jenny! And I loved her too—but she turned ag'in me, when I started down

hill, and I went all the faster to the dogs' for her turnin'. If women would be patient, men might be wiser. Now, get away to your sweetheart, or the boys will be back presently to make her heart ache."

"Why should they injure me?"

"Poor young fool! You're on their track, and you can't live."

"I shall not leave you," said Augustus, firmly."

A silence, broken only by the heavy, labored breathing of the burglar and the restless motion of Augustus's horse tethered there to the tree, followed his bravely-spoken determination.

Then the burglar waked up to consciousness only one time more.

"I have been dreaming. Happy dreams; the pain's all gone."

"You are better?"

"No, I am worse. I'll die, I'm thinking, before the boys gets through buryin' the box, and they'll have another buryin' to get through with in the darkness here. Young man, I kinder wish you was a parson, or a priest, or one of those good folks that undertake to insure you the next world, for a few honest words spoken at the last gasp in this."

"My poor man, speak your honest words, and I, a minister's son, may be able to comfort you with the promises that are held out to penitent sinners."

"Might you know how to pray for a dying sinner. I've forgot all the words I learned of poor old mother, and somehow, I feel right now as if—if the Angel Gabriel were to come and ask me (even if I was strong and well again as the boys out yonder) if I'd take them diamonds we stole from old Lonsdale's bank, or the good words mother used to teach, I'd say give me the good words, they're the true diamonds after all. The rest's nothing but shining glass. But there, I've peached on the boys—I never thought to sink that low—its time I was pegging out—I've grown too mean for a honest rogue even."

Bending eagerly over the stalwart form, so full, in such apparent vigor, that it was almost impossible to believe life was fast ebbing out of it, Augustus treasured up every word that fell from the dying sinner's lips. If he could only get some clue to the burying spot of the bank-box! Or if Paul would only get back with help. God, how long he staid!

A crashing of heavy foot-falls in the under-bush! Help had come.

"Paul!" Clear, welcoming, glad, the voice rang out upon the darkness.

"Paul! Who in hell have we here?" A voice harsh, mocking, ruffianly, answered Augustus's call for his cousin, and a dark lantern suddenly flashed its light full upon him, as he stood there over the wounded man.

"The burglars!" For a moment, he cowered in actual fear, repenting him of the foolhardiness that had drawn him into this danger. He glanced towards his horse; the men were between it and him. "Paul! Paul! Oh God! I would not have tarried so if you were in this extremity," he moaned almost audibly; then, with one heroic effort, he shook off his terror to find the ruffians eyeing him with a diabolical coolness that once more froze the warm pulses of his heart.

"He's gone!" said the elder of the two remaining thieves, touching with his coarse boot, the body of the burglar, who had gone to his last sleep without a sigh or a struggle, "Did he peach on us?"

"Peach on you?" Augustus repeated the words in ignorant wonder.

"Yes, by God! Peach on us—don't fool, or you'll be of no more account than Joe's burly carcass here, before you're ten minutes older."

"I do not know what you mean."

"Did he tell tales, then; damn him, and you too!"

"He told me that he was one of the bank robbers—told me that his companions had gone off to bury their plunder, and begged me to leave him; which I would not do."

"More fool you. But, as we're gentlemen as always pays our way, we'll give you one chance for your life, to square accounts for being kind to him that's gone."

Hope bounded full-pulsed into Augustus's fainting soul. He was young, life was sweet and Lucy was dear!

"Yer say Joe got soft life towards the last, as they all do when judgment day's 'bout to break, and tole tales out of school, hey?"

"He was decidedly repentant."

"Do you lie when you say he told you no more than that we was hidin' the plunder?"

"I do not lie. He told me no more."

"Poor old Jce. He was a good one for biz, though. Damn the box that cost him his life—their welcome to it, who may find it;" and with a swing, the ruffian sent the fatal box, to recover which, Augustus Ames had dared too much, rolling to his feet.

He stooped eagerly and secured it.

"Now, young chap, for you. You're young and you've got a smooth chin yet; we don't war on boys. We're gentlemen of honor, that supports ourselves by occasionally reliev'in' them as is got more'n their share of spondulix. Accordin' to your own showin' you don't know no dangerous deal after all. Five minutes' time we'll give you to make up your mind in, whether or no you'll hold your jaw about what you do know. Say you will, and there's your horse and there's your road. Say no, and you'll put us to the trouble of diggin' a hole big enough to 'commodate you and poor old Joe at oncet. In the meantime, we'll have to trouble you for the watch I'm purty sho is jangling on to the end of that fancy chain, to count your five minutes by. We're gentlemen of honor, an' we don't keer to cheat you out o' one second av your allotted time."

Mechanically, feeling already as if he were done with life, Augustus Ames unwooded the gold chain from about his neck.

"Take it, Bill, and kneel down by the lantern."

"Kneelin's not much in my line," Bill answers, with a ruffianly oath against the thorny carpet upon which he kneels to bring the open watch close to the lantern's face.

In a dream, a horrible, terrible dream, Augustus, palid, with lips tight clenched, his black hair thrown backward from his clammy forehead, his large mournful eyes fixed with incredulous horror on the kneeling ruffian, took the whole awful truth in.

He had thrown away his life to win—what? A poor partnership in a perishable bank—a girl who loved another!

"One minute gone!"

No, it was cowardice that made things look so. Paul would be here in a minute with help. He could not be longer than another minute away! He had been gone a lifetime already!

"Two!"

With folded arms he turned his gaze

downward upon the ruffian kneeling there, holding the gold watch close to the lantern's eye. It was a coarse, pitiless face—no appeal to his mercy would avail. Then upon the features of his companion the minister's son turned his wistful gaze. God help him when those five minutes should expire, for there was no help in man.

"Three!"

Should he promise silence and let them go? Was he called on to dare more—to risk more? A heavy sigh falls upon his agonized ear. He turns; it's only Molly, Paul's pretty mare, tethered there to the tree. Her great, calm eyes gleam upon him by the lantern's glare with a wistfulness in them that looks like pity. She sighs for her own liberation not for his extremity!

"Four!"

Hope dies! Paul has deserted him. Lucy will never know that he was lord of himself in this, the supremest agony of his life. Paul will win her.

"Boy, are you mad? Promise!"

"I!" He bends his head. Hope, deliverance, life! The sound of clattering hoofs! Nearer, nearer! Faster, faster! "Paul!"

"Five! By God, die then!"

Paul has come, but come too late! Help is at hand. Augustus needs it."

Lights flash through the sombre woods as a madly-excited, pursuing party dash after the fleeing burglars, leaving only Paul and Mr. Samuels bending heart-broken over the minister's dying son. "One minute sooner, and all would have been well," he sighed, then closed his dim eyes upon the world and all its cheats.

Paul has the fast stiffening form clasped close to his bursting heart.

"Gus, dear Gus! God, why did I go at your bidding? Speak to me once more, cousin! Say something to me, my boy. Something that I can carry to poor Aunt Maria. It's going to kill her, Gus, to have you leave her this way. Open your eyes just once more. Just think you're not hurt, and maybe you'll rally."

The dark eyes opened, so large, so dim, so mournful, that Paul knew the end must be nigh.

Tenderly clasping the clay-cold hands within his own, the Rev. Mr. Samuels's lips moved in silent prayer.

"Paul, tell mother!—tell mother—" faint, gentle, powerless, the voice dies away.

"Augustus, say it after me; it will comfort that dear mother." The minister bent in lowly pity over the dying boy, his own voice trembling from excess of emotion: "I know."

"I know," the dying voice repeats, gently, docilely, "that my"—

"That my"—

"Redeemer liveth!"

For one great, final effort worsted nature gathers together her scattered forces, the eyes of the dying man opened fearlessly, his voice expends its last strength in obedience to Lucy's brother.

"I do know that my Redeemer liveth! Lucy, my fair-haired queen, my gentle redeemer from the old life of evil and uselessness. God bless her and you too, Paul! You are still on the winning side, cousin. Tell mother I was not afraid to die! Tell Lucy I was lord of myself. Tell father—tell father—I am sorry for him!"

And that was all. The eyes closed wearily, and Augustus Ames lay dead in his cousin's arms.

The morning dawned gray and chill, and when the new day pierced its way through the thick, matted branches of the trees about the spot where he had met his fate, there was nothing there to tell how a man can die, save a few trampled bushes, a dying heap of ashes and a fatal bank-box, for which a fresh, young life had been rashly thrown away.

But he had "made his mark!"—a mark that neither time nor change could ever efface, then soared

"Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call earth."

CHAPTER XXXI.

STRICKEN HEARTS.

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto
my sorrow."

The messenger of evil tidings has but a losing office; a fact which was brought home to Mr. Samuels, when he consented, at Paul Weyland's earnest solicitation, to assume the painful duty of "breaking" the sad tidings to his brother minister of Wickam.

"Breaking the sad tidings!" As

though the mills of the gods, which grind slowly, but grind exceeding small, might not reduce each anguish-burdened word to infinitesimal atoms, without eliminating one iota of their soul-crushing power.

"You can do it so much better than I," Paul had said, when pleading for his own exemption, as if there were degrees of excellence in stabbing a fellow creature. And the minister had consented, leaving the Homestead converted into a house of mourning, by reason of its sheeted dead.

Mr. Samuels's call for "Mr. Ames, alone," was not responded to immediately. Mr. Ames was writing the closing paragraph upon a sermon, and he never allowed visitors to interfere with that serious occupation; so the younger clergyman had ten or a dozen heavy moments left on his hands, in which to become more timid, more nervous, more tremulous than he had ever known himself before.

The gray minister came presently, as erect of bearing, as rigid of manner, as cold of eye, as he had been any time the last forty years. He looked time in the face with the same bold defiance that he meted out to powerless humanity.

Mr. Samuels's strength of purpose came back to him in that stony presence. Surely, that iron man would prove equal to bearing everything, even the harrowing recital then burdening his own tenderer breast.

More the less gently and tenderly, though, does he tell all his horrible story.

The minister of Wickam Church, after one convulsive start, and a single groan, which nature, rebelling against discipline, gives utterance to, heard him through without other sign or token that these evil tidings bore in any manner more heavily upon him than upon the bronze sphinx there upon the mantel clock.

Mr. Samuels sighs, relieved. His share of a hated task is accomplished. Then, a silence so dead, so complete, so oppressive, as to make it seem as if the end of all things has come with the end of Augustus Ames, falls upon the little parlor. The clock, a slow-striking, hoarse-throated clock, tolls twelve deliberately, monotonously, harshly, like some soulless bell-ringer, tolling the allotted knell for some one's dead darling, in utter indif-

ference to the aching hearts, throbbing and pulsing with anguish, somewhere within sound of each slow-coming clang. A troop of emancipated school-boys dash noisily past the rectory windows; their mirthful voices float discordantly in upon the sorrowful stillness. The shutters are only bowed, and through the arch, a broad, slanting sunbeam falls just across the old man's knees—his gray eyes are fixed upon it, but there is no speculation in them. Presently, his large withered hand goes out into the broad ray, among the thick coming motes, the gay, bright things dancing there like fairy sprites in the moon's silver path, disturb him; he tries to brush the motes from out the sunbeam. Will he never have done with his warfare upon motes? A shining black-bug, made bold by the night-like silence, creeps stealthily along the dusty carpet, to meet a grinding fate under the rector's heel. Every sense seems quivering with vitality, straining after an outlet.

Mr. Samuels looks at the self-contained man in wonder at the strong hand contending with the dancing motes—at the tight-pressed lips—and marvels whence this marble calm. Is it heartlessness, or is it the complete subjugation of the man's self? Is it exaltation above the possibility of suffering, or is it the in-born conviction that "earth has no sorrow which Heaven cannot heal?"

"And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly, my hope is even in Thee."

It is the gray clergyman's voice that breaks the silence with the offertory of the Christian's submission, even in the first hour of the father's agony, and Harris Samuels bows his head, as the offertory floats heavenward, in gentle reverence for the strong old man that offers it.

Then Mr. Ames remembers that he is not alone.

"My young friend, your office has been no kindly one. You have acquitted yourself well. I thank you, and, may I add, good morning."

Left to himself, alone with his God, St. John Ames bowed his stricken head, until the long gray hair swept his knees, and the sunny motes danced merrily round about it, while David's anguished wail burst from his aching heart: "My son! My son!"

Long and bitter were the throes of mortal agony—of yearning desire to call back

the dead that pardon might be craved for a life time of sternness—of bitter un-availing remorse for that sternness, that the stern old man endured there, unseen, unpitied, save by his Maker. Then came thoughts of the weaker vessel upon whom this same vial of wrath had been emptied.

"Poor wife! Poor mother!" After a while the minister of Wickam girded up his loins for a fiery ordeal, and prayed for strength to press this bitter cup home to lips that would find it hard to say "Thy will be done," while draining it to the dregs.

"*Marial Wife!*" A faint blush stole over the wife's faded features. It had been so long since St. John had come to her, and taken her hand so gently in between his own, and called her 'Wife' so kindly. It carried her back to a bridal moon waned now long, long ago. She did not speak! He would say all he had to say without encouragement. Her eyes drooped until they rested on their clasped hands; the hands were thin and wrinkled and old now, but had they ever failed to do what they had promised on that long-ago morning, when they were locked together in the sight of God and man? Had the promise of that morning brought all she had hoped for? Oh, foolish wife! Idle introspection! sprung from the clasping of one time-withered hand within another! Born of a gentle tone and an unwonted caress.

But teach a woman the folly of analyzing the *is*, and to cease the dreaming about the "might have been," and thou canst loose the bands of Orion.

"Maria, man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward!"

Mrs. Ames gave a nervous start; she had been straying in such pleasant paths, going over again the early wedded years, when it was not so rare to have that poor, thin hand caressed, that she was not quite prepared for a week day sermon.

"Yes, Mr. Ames," she says very indifferently, for he had been impressing like uncheerful aphorisms upon her, for more than a quarter of a century now, so she could not display any very lively interest at this resumption of a threadbare topic. After all, then, he had only come there to be monotonous.

"Do you think," the minister resumes, his voice growing less steady the nearer he approaches the awful revelation,

"do you think, my dear Maria, you are blessed with that lively faith which will enable you, come what may, to bow to the rod?"

Ratiocination may be useful to men. Women have no need for it; their conclusions come to them, they do not go to their conclusions. Mr. Ames was so gentle, so patient, so affectionate, that something terrible had happened. It was Augustus!

"Tell me, my boy, what is it!"

Then he told her. Not with the gentle, womanlike tenderness, with which the Rev. Harris Samuels had told it to him, because it was not in him so to do; but he did his very best to tell it gently. Who can do more?

Then they came from far and near, well-meaning and kindly, to pour the doubtful balm of wordy condolence into the torn heart of a mother weeping for her first-born.

Wan, weary and hopeless, she listened to them all with a child-like meekness, pitiful in its gentleness. Only when the prosperous sister came, speaking so flippantly of the bitterness of losing a dear one, generalizing in the modish black silk (in which the Judge's lady had toned down her magnificence for "poor Maria's sake"), about this vale of tears, daring, in her proud, care-free immunity from toil and trouble, to ally herself as a co-heir with this stricken mother, in man's inheritance of woe, the pale, worn sufferer turned upon her with a querulous impatience, wrung from a heart that had borne very long and very patiently a load, under which this serene comforter would have faltered and sunk, moaning aloud against high Heaven's pitilessness.

"Catharine! Catharine! Not from you. What do you know of my mighty agony—your Paul, living, lusty, yours? What do you know of this 'vale of tears'? You, who since we were little children together, have been shielded from every rude wind. What do you know of the shadows in which my life must drag out—you, whose lines have fallen in such pleasant places? Let those who are indeed my fellow-sufferers, come to me, and tell me that they know what it is! Success and happiness have been yours all your life. When you talk of sorrow, it is like the babbling of an ignorant little child. Go! Go back to your handsome home, your successful husband, your

beautiful boy! They are all yours. I would not have you one shade less happy, less prosperous. But do not—Oh! Catty, I grow so weak, so wicked, God forgive me! St. John asked me if I could bow me to the rod. Not yet, not yet. He asks it of me too soon. The mother is mighty in me; the Christian is weak, so weak. And He took him away when it seemed hardest to give him up. Just when I was growing proud of him, sure of him. Just when he had become lord of himself. Father of mercy, Thou hast made Thy yoke very grievous. Kiss me, Kate, and go away, dear. You can do me no good. It is not your fault. You came out of the pure kindness of your kind heart. Give me but a little time, I will conquer this wicked rebellion. But now, now, Catty, your diamonds mock me. They flash at me so brightly, in the darkness he has cast me into. Go, sister. Send me the widows and the fatherless and the childless. Send me those who can say to me, 'Be of good cheer, for as thou art, so once was I,' and then I will take for my comforters."

Yet a little while, and the minister's wife took up her cross once more, going about her narrowed round of duties, a little paler, and a little thinner, but no longer rebellious. Where there was sickness, where there was moaning, where there were sad hearts to be cheered, there she was very sure to be. After that one outburst of petulant misery in presence of her sister, no murmur was ever heard to cross her lips.

And the father! He, whose life had been one prolonged and uncalled-for sacrifice of Nature's promptings on the altar of an iron will! No one could say that it was remorse, for every act of his life had been squared by duty's unerring rule. No one could say that it was repentance, for why should a man repent him of doing as duty commanded. But as the days went gliding by, the rigid form grew less erect, the gray eyes lost their steadfast gaze, and learned a trick of drooping wearily earthward when he walked along, as if looking for something he was never to find. The harsh voice grew feeble and less dictatorial, sounding a late apology for the stern judgments, he, a feeble, erring mortal, had passed upon his fellow-man. His now white hair fell about a face grown newly careworn. A sadness, which was never

more to be lifted, softened the stern face into a touching pathos.

People said that "the minister of Wickam Church had broken," his usefulness was waning, his pews were left empty, he no longer had the power nor the desire to fulminate wrathful dicta.

So the day soon came when Wesley Weyland's prophesy was fulfilled, and he was reduced to a feeble constituency of women and children.

But still the Lord's vineyard is his chosen field of labor, and feebly will he labor on to the bitter end.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE MINISTER'S WOOING.

"His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that nature might stand up
And say to all the world, This was a man!"

—*Shakespeare.*

It was the first organ-lesson Delphine had tried to take since she had sat in the family pew, up near the pulpit, and listened to the funeral services of Augustus Ames. And the lesson was a failure.

This had always been her "white hour"—the calm evening hour when she and Mr. Samuels and Lucy would walk over to the little church and sing "the birds to sleep." The darkness that would come creeping round about them, was a gentle, hallowed obscurity, void of gloom or terror. Sometimes, the moon would send slanting rays down upon them through the tall chancel-window, and then she would move away from the organ and beg her teacher to take her place—for a solemn hush would come over her, with the white moonlight gleaming among the empty pews, that disinclined to words or actions, while she, with idle hands and voiceless lips, worshiped there in her own untaught way.

But this evening everything was wrong. The air of the church had grown vault-like. She could see poor Gus's bier still standing before the chancel every time she turned her head that way. The darkness fell so suddenly. Who knew it was so late, and why should Lucy, this evening of all evenings, have failed to come?

"It is useless, Mr. Samuels, worse than useless. I feel miserable and wicked down to my very finger tips. There's no music in my soul this evening,

I am quite fit for treason, stratagem and spoil. Which do you incline to?"

"The treason I think you are giving utterance to now," Mr. Samuels answers lightly, but his gentle face clouds up with disappointment. When could he ever feel quite sure of this bright comet-like creature, radiant and erratic, absolutely defiant of any circumscribed orbit? "That you should feel sad is right and natural, and that word 'wicked,' which you are so ready in handling, will, I imagine, stand analysis."

"No, indeed; no! I really mean that I feel diabolical. (How could she tell him of the stormy encounter at home that morning, in which a rage-frenzied mother had stooped to personal abuse, when she had loftily refused to admit M. Emile Girardeau's addresses, or of the tiresome sermon she had been subjected to subsequently from Mother Danbury's pious lips, upon the sin of disobedience? Between them all Eleanor Morgan's fair and stately lily was fast drooping earthward). Where's the use of being good and pious and prayerful? The harder one tries, the more temptations to wickedness spring up. The best people I know are the unhappiest. It is not true that if you ask you shall receive. Don't we all know that Aunt Maria's whole life was one prayer for her son's welfare and happiness? And certainly, she was righteous enough for her prayers to avail. But her son was horribly murdered, and she and her husband (who ought to be a man after God's own heart, if God likes men who mortify the flesh and resist the devil and all that sort of thing) are made utterly wretched for life, while Uncle Weyland and Aunt Catherine, who don't pray to anybody, get along splendidly, have everything they want, and could not possibly be any happier. And look at Evelyn Morgan—gentle, holy, pure-hearted saint, who never hurt a worm in all her sinless life—doomed to a lifetime of the most horrible suffering. And your own good mother, did she not pray that the bitter cup might pass from her, when she knew she was destined to live on in total darkness? I repeat it—all the good people I know are the unhappy ones, and all the wicked ones happy."

"Then, when you say you are perfectly wretched and diabolically wicked in one breath, what becomes of your theory of life?" He was very patient with her

—he did not care to pelt that drooping head with hard theological pebbles, any more than one would care to quiet a fretful baby by reasoning with it about the idleness of tears.

"Oh! You will not find it at all difficult to pick out paradoxes in my statements. But I have good authority for them. Mr. Samuels, how do you good people explain away good Scripture paradoxes—or do you leave them unexplained, and just swallow them whole, trusting to Providence for their spiritual digestion?"

The pastor's face looked troubled. He had labored faithfully, tenderly and diligently over this wayward lamb that had given him more trouble than all the rest of his easily-folded flock, and there were times when his heart glowed with a pardonable pride over the promise of success held out by the gentleness and docility of her conduct. But now, there she sat in open rebellion, looking so bright, so beautiful in her defiance, that the man in him bowed in passionate adoration, even while the pastor said in grave rebuke:

"Come, let us leave God's temple, it is not a fit place for the treason you declared yourself ready for. I think I shall take you home. We will talk about these matters when you are calmer. Something has disturbed you today, and, as we are all so prone to do, you cry out against high Heaven, and charge it with neglect of your puny affairs."

"From you, too!" The girl's proud lip quivered. Here, at least, she had never met rebuke. Was all the world turned against her?

"Yes. But you must bear in mind whose livery I boast. What would you think of your humblest servitor, if he could stand mute, while a fellow-servant impugned your goodness or justice?"

"Why do you always try to make me feel so small in my own estimation? And you succeed, too."

They had left the church now, and he was taking her home as he had said he would. He drew her hand within his arm, and left her last question unanswered, for his own soul was too full for words.

He loved this bright wayward girl, and wanted to make her his wife. He knew very well she was not just yet all that a minister's wife should be, but he thought he could trust to time to aid him in ton-

ing down this surface petulance, and, when once her true nature should become her abiding nature, she would be all that he could ask or desire. He had not intended to say anything to her just yet. But she was unhappy—he could always tell it by these moody, discontented outbursts.

In truth, Delphine Staunton was groping helplessly in a moral darkness for the lamp to her feet, which a dying father had endeavored to secure for his orphaned girl by putting her in the wise keeping of Eleanor Morgan. But destiny had overruled his foresight by substituting a vain and frivolous mother for a wise and gentle guardian. She was young and saw through a glass, darkly. She reasoned in a crude, finite way, from her own childish observations. That her principles were not fixed above the vacillation of weak minds, must be charged to the diverse character of the influences brought to bear upon her. The Morgans, moral but liberal; the Weylands, liberal and careless; her mother, careless of all save outward form; her uncle, Mr. Ames, presenting religion in its gloomiest garb; Mother Danbury, sincere but narrow, presenting it in its most poverty-stricken aspect. Who was right? Whose ways were most acceptable to the Ruler of destinies? Whom should she follow? From the profundity of her perplexity sprung her wordy rebellion.

Much of her perplexity Mr. Samuels knew of; still more he guessed at. How his heart yearned over her! How he longed to draw her out of this vexing conflict of examples, to lead her heavenward by the road he himself had chosen. What good reason was there why he should not ask for this crowning blessing to his life?

"Small in your own estimation, Delphine, I should hardly dare to do that, when you have made for yourself such a lofty place in my own!"

He had never called her Delphine before; in fact, it was very seldom, indeed, that he dropped into personalities in his conversation, and of all personalities his own seemed ever farthest away from mind or lips.

She turned towards him with unaffected gladness in face and voice.

"Then I am not altogether too obstinate and wayward for you to like me? Life is so dark with me, unless I have

some one near me to love me and pet me. I think, maybe, Max and Nonee spoiled me and unfitted me for what has come. It is so different now. I wonder if unkindness makes everybody feel as wicked as I do under it. When those near and dear to me, those from whom I have the best right to look for patience and sympathy and tenderness, mete me out instead harshness and injustice and coldness. God help me! How dark the whole world grows, and how all the good in one seems to shrivel up, until there's none left."

"I think I know just what you feel. It is natural and not the peculiar offspring of any particular wickedness in yourself. I think, too, I know just what you want."

"I want love and kindness. Give me those, and I can always be at my best."

"I think I can promise you both."

"Oh, I know you can," she answers with grateful alacrity, utterly unconscious that she is being wooed, "for you are always the same gentle, kind friend, and so is Lucy and dear Mrs. Samuels, and I do not know what I should do without you all three. You are all the comfort I have in this sad, new life. But I cannot just explain to you this hunger to be petted and caressed, and made a great deal over, as if you were such a deal of importance in a household, as they used to spoil me in Wickam; but it does not spoil a woman to be made such a deal of; it is the wine of life to her, and when it is gone, the dregs taste so bitter—so bitter. Don't speak. I know just what you will say. You will preach to me about the duty of endurance, of cheerfulness, and of fortitude. I know it all by heart, and I recognize the duty, too. But then, why should people make endurance and cheerfulness so hard—so very, very hard. I know what it is my duty to be and do. All I ask is for some manner of recognition after that duty has been performed—some one to lay a hand on your head, or to kiss you once in a great while, or to put an arm about you caressingly—it goes farther than words. My life, my strength, all the ability to do any good thing, lies in it. Now, I have grown egotistical, and poured out all my secret trouble to you. You have been patient in listening; but I know I have wearied you."

"I have been more quiet than patient.

I have been indeed a little impatient for you to cease, so that I might say something that it has been on my mind to say for a long time past. I am not going to preach. Your outburst has not even furnished me a text. I simply wanted to tell you once more that I can promise you both the love and kindness you crave. Not the placid affection of your pastor, Delphine, but a warm, ardent devotion, which impels me to ask you to be my wife."

In the few years of her association with this gentle, unselfish, holy man, Delphine Staunton had come to look upon him as a sort of purified spirit, encumbered with a body for mere temporary convenience, while he labored in his Master's service here below. And to have this embodied spirit come to her after the fashion of men, and ask her to be his wife, produced in her a conflict of feelings too full of awe to be ranked with commonplace surprise—too full of amazement to be linked with pleasure.

She was quite still, and he went on:

"I so little ever thought of asking any one to be my wife, that I cannot woo you in set and elegant phrases. It is a matter I have spent very little thought upon. To me it would be a good and pleasant thing to have you always with me. I have thought so when I have seen you with my mother and sister, who love you very dearly, and I thought so this evening, when you spoke of your desires to be the nearest and the dearest thing in some one's life"—

"But," she interrupted quickly, catching her breath nervously, and blushing crimson under the veil of the dark, "I was not talking or thinking of husbands and wives."

Mr. Samuels laughs that little, low musical laugh, which is his nearest approach to hilarity.

"Granted. But is that any reason why you should decline bringing the idea of husbands and wives to bear upon this great hunger you talk about?"

"You would make a good woman of me," she says thoughtfully.

"I should help you to make one of yourself."

"In return for which I would make you—a very wretched man. You do not know what you are asking."

"Yes. For I have not asked it on the spur of sudden feeling, or an impulse of

pity. I told you it had been on my mind to say it a long time."

"And now that you have said it, I do not know what to say in reply. I have always thought of you as something set apart and above the worries of small, sinning humanity. I have never thought of you as needing or desiring a helpmate, as other men need and desire them. And, I hardly feel thankful to you for stepping down from your pedestal in this unsolicited fashion, even if it was to do me a most unmerited honor."

"Remember, please, that your placing me upon the pedestal, was, also, an unsolicited honor. I am in no ways, Delphine, exalted above the desires and temptations of my kind. Least of all am I removed from the universal desire to love and to be loved. I have offered you, in bungling fashion, perhaps, the best offering any man can bring to a woman—the offer of sincere and honest affection. I seem to have taken you very much by surprise. So much so, that I think it would neither be just to yourself nor to me for you to answer at once. Not just to yourself—for, if you should incline to an affirmative answer, it might be that your present frame of mind would influence you towards the man who offers you love and kindness when they seem least attainable from other sources. Not just to me, for I want you to think about me in this matter not as one exalted by his calling above the ordinary level of mankind, and therefore, an object of awe and reverence. I want you to look at me, now that I have come down from the pedestal of your own erection, as a man who is capable of loving very dearly, and who is deeply in earnest in his desire to make you his wife."

"Now, I am going to leave you, and when your mind is fully and calmly made up, you will let me know."

"How many days am I to have for thinking?" she asks the question in the timid voice of a child frightened at her task.

"Days!" (His voice is full of gentle scorn). "It would take you days to decide upon the shape of your fall hat!"

"Weeks, then."

"I shall not limit you. Strange, is it not, how loath people are to bring calm deliberation to bear upon this, the mightiest crisis of a life? The choice of

a profession in life, the choice of land upon which to build a crumbling tenement, the choice of a partner for a business transaction—almost any choice we can be called upon to make, may without reproach (indeed, the contrary would cause reproach), be made matter of lengthy, calm, sober deliberation; only marriage, the one awful, unalterable decision man and woman is called upon to make, must be denied the wise counsel of the head, and left entirely to the unbridled impulses of the heart. This is not as it should be. It is not as I wish it to be with us. You must be deliberate and I will be patient."

Then he went away, and left her standing upon her own steps, feeling strangely doubtful as to whether she had been lectured or courted.

She did not go into the house immediately. The moon was full and bright, and she stood there watching the minister's retreating form as he walked down the broad gravel path that gleamed white and distinct in the clear light of the moon.

It seemed as if she was looking at the man, Harris Samuels, for the first time. She had never thought to note how graceful his tall, slender form was, nor how perfectly his well-shaped head was poised. Yes, he was handsome, undoubtedly, and his eyes had rested on her with such perfect love, kindling them in to a new brightness! It was surely a great honor to win the love of such a man. She felt it very deeply. Then why was it that even in the moment that she assured herself she was being honored—in the very moment when she repeated to herself again and again that the companionship he offered her would ensure her for life the loving kindness she missed so, now that Max and Eleanor were lost to her—why was it that she was fully conscious of a disappointed feeling in the minister who had just gotten through with his placid, quiet wooing? Why was it that she felt strangely resentful towards him in the midst of her gratitude? As her pastor, her St. Paul, as she loved to call him, he had been perfect in her eyes, and she had loved to think of him as something better and truer than common mortals. It was this feeling which had made it so easy for her to seek counsel and comfort at his hands. But St. Paul had deliberately come down from his high estate and de-

manded that she should regard him as a common mortal, and this she resented. But then, he had said it was an unsolicited pedestal she had perched him upon. And, again, there was something altogether unsatisfying about this unexpected wooing. She had never been wooed before, but she had felt in a vague sort of way that, in common with every other woman, she should be some of these days. When, how, and by whom, were the vaguest points of all. But, somehow, there was none of the fire and glow and delicious bewilderment, that she had fancied necessary auxiliaries to a true wooing o't. She felt as still and cold and collected as if she and the pastor had gotten through with their organ lesson with the usual placid satisfaction. Would she feel thus if she was in love? But then, what was her feeling for him if it was not love? She could not analyze her own sensations, and being altogether ignorant of the fact that it is our finest and truest feelings which will not bear the cold eye of analysis, she turned her about and entered the house, in hardly a more serene frame of mind than she had left it an hour or two before. It was with satisfaction she remembered that he had insisted on her being very deliberate.

She paused on her way to her own room to inquire dutifully into her mother's physical condition. She found her clothed and vivacious.

Father Richards was once more their guest!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"SISTER AZUBAH."

"—And lo, a cell,
Narrow and dark, naught thro' the gloom discerned;
Nought save the crucifix, the rosary,
And the gray habit lying by to shroud
Her beauty and grace."

—Rogers.

And at last Delphine has found her Gamaliel!

Father Richards has come to her in the hour of her extremity, and she sits at his feet in child-like humility, conscious that all her doubts and perplexities are melting into misty nothings in the fervid heat of his eloquence.

Here at last is gentleness, learning, piety and power combined—combined in the person of a man who has put away

from him the pomp and vanity of every selfish desire, and is content to live out his little span, uncheered by wife and child, so that his Master's work shall be the better done.

He does not tell her that she is a child, and must wait for the ripening of her judgment, to make all that is now so dark and vexing, simple and clear. He does not try to convince her that her troubles are imaginary. Nor does he suggest marriage as the great panacea for all a woman's troubles.

On the contrary, he agrees with her when she declares the world hollow and disappointing. He agrees with her when she calls the on-coming years but so many heralds of fresh trouble and anxiety of spirit.

And then, before the girl's yearning vision he holds up the picture of the nun's blessed exemption from the wearing, grinding cares of a worldling's life. The peace which passeth all understanding is hers! The divine quietude which can only come to those who have closed the door of their hearts against the world is hers! If she has nothing to hope for here below, neither has she anything to fear! He who is in the world must be of it. Whom the world satisfies, let him remain in and of it. But to whom the world is but a snare and a pitfall, the cloister opens wide its arms, promising protection, peace, security!

The vexed question was solved! Happy in her home? No. With her mother, this strange, unloved, uncongenial mother, she could never be happy. Happy as Mr. Samuel's wife? No. As a minister's wife she would be a source of torment to herself and every one about her. Striving after that perfection she could never attain, yet, without which as a minister's wife, she would be a by-word and a reproach. Those alone whom she had loved with all the force of her passionate nature, she would never see again, save at rare intervals, and as ordinary acquaintances.

Mr. Samuel's had promised her love and kindness. And he would fulfil his promise, she well knew, but he was powerless to shield her sensitive nature from the pricks and stings of petty worldlings. Father Richards promised her love and kindness with the pricking, stinging world shut out. "Peace on earth!" was the device upon his standard, and who could look into those calm eyes of

his, or note the majestic repose of the whole man, and doubt that he had found it himself?

"I will go with you, uncle; but you must give me a little while to make my last will and testament. Say a week." She closes her sentence with a nervous little laugh; but she is very white and still after it, and getting up, presently, she goes away to her own room to finish that week's diary and despatch it to Maxwell Morgan.

"DEAR MAX: I am writing you the last diary I shall ever send off to you; for I have found a way out of all the worries of this stupid, dull life of mine, and I have gladly clasped the hand held out to lead me through the door of the convent into the abode of peace. I have tried so hard, Max, dear, to write to you always cheerfully; for you remember what you said to me about making things harder for you and Nonee, by being gloomy and obstinate? But I am worn out with the struggle!

I tried to love my mother. I could not. She has yet to develop one lovable trait. Mr. Samuels asked me to be his wife, and for about half an hour I thought maybe I would say 'yes.' It was wicked for me to think so for half a second. It was altogether selfish. But I do believe there is no good left in me, since I've lost you and Nonee. So what is there better for me to do than to go with Uncle Richards and become a nun? I can look back upon the time when the thought of such an existence would have driven me wild with horror. But how differently things look now. What is there in my home but a mother who spends her days in slovenliness, novel-reading and sleeping? Poor old Dan, faithful but not soul-satisfying, and his narrow-souled mother? Surely I will find in the companionship of my sister nuns pleasant and brighter days than these. Uncle Richards pictures their busy, tranquil lives so beautifully, I long for the happy seclusion of the convent, Max, as a delightful change from the dull fretfulness of my present life.

I promised you that I would take no step of any importance without consulting you. But you have gone so far away from me that I will have no time to consult you; for I have promised Uncle Richards to go with him one week from tonight. But you spoke of steps in which my welfare might be jeopardized. In this one it is being secured forever.

Don't feel sorry for me, Max, as I know people do feel about young girls who enter convents. It is my present life that should call down your pity.

Indeed, indeed, dear Max, I have tried to be strong and cheerful, but it is so hard with no one to help you and every one to

try you; and when I found I could not really be cheerful under it all, I tried to make believe every time I wrote to you or saw Nonee. But now, rejoice with me, for I have found a way out of it all, and before this reaches you I will be beyond the reach of your pen—beyond the reach of your reproaches—beyond the reach of the narrow, selfish, repining existence your 'Calamity' has lived ever since she was torn away from those she loves best and alone of all the world.

And now, good-by. A long, a solemn, an irrevocable good-by from Delphine Staunton. 'Sister Azubah' (which means deserted Max) sends you greeting."

"DEAR NONEE: As your brother has become such a wanderer of late, I am utterly at a loss to know how to convey this to him, so I send it to you to be forwarded."

And the next day Sergeant Danbury carries the fateful package to the post office, taking Father Richards with him as far as the depot, to return the coming week for his convert.

Delphine's valedictory travelled to Wickam, but no further. It was put into Miss Morgan's hand just a little while after she had finished reading a letter from Max, telling her he would be with them in a day or two, accompanied by M. Brousseau, who would be his guest during his stay in Wickam.

"M. Brousseau has retained me as his counsel in an affair, which, if I conduct successfully, will place me in a position financially, Eleanor, to render me independent of all scruples against asking your ward to be my wife, because she is an heiress. I am not cured, you will say. No, nor shall I ever be cured of the deepest, tenderest, most abiding affection for our Heaven-loaned darling"

This closing sentence in Max's letter—a letter so full of hope and buoyancy—was still ringing in Eleanor's ears when Delphine's communication of her firm resolve to go with her uncle, the priest, in one week's time, came to her.

Their darling buried in a convent! Her great heart beat with a feverish anxiety for Max's coming. This monstrous sacrifice must not be! But if he should be delayed, and should return to receive only this poor child's piteous farewell as the reward for his tender constancy! A future of joy or woe for her two dear ones, lay wavering in the balance of the days, and she could do nothing but wait and pray.

Should she write and let the child

know that Max was expected home in a few days? Yes, she would persuade her to give him the poor satisfaction of a personal farewell, and then—and then—then Max must work out his own salvation!

So by the return mail a heart-warming little note was despatched to "Sister Azubah," elect.

"My darling, you have been taken from my guardianship, and I dare not say you shall or you shall not do this thing. I only ask you not to be precipitate. Wait. I am in daily expectation of Max's return, accompanied by M. Brousseau, who is coming to America on business of importance. When your guardian arrives, we must have you with us awhile. With the old affection,
ELEANOR."

Careless in most matters, Mrs. Staunton was rigid in asserting her right to a first inspection of the mail-bag. So Delphine turned away with a disappointed face, when Madame looked up calmly from the package in her hand, and said: "Nothing for you, Della, dear."

So Della goes away for her lonely ramble, and Madame rolls a pen-handle boldly but carefully under the lip of a sealed envelope, and obtains news which would have made glad the heart of her daughter, wandering about under the big oaks in an aimless, listless fashion, but which sends the angry blood bounding and throbbing through her own system, until it all seems to settle under the dark brow, and fill the veins on her forehead to bursting.

A fierce tinkling of her bell brings Tony, fleet of foot, dull of eye, discreet of utterance.

He stands solemnly by, while Madame's pen flies with savage rapidity over a sheet of note paper.

"There, do you know who to take it to?"

"Yes'm," Tony replies, with what is intended for a knowing look.

"And what do you get, if you do your errand well?"

"Sugar'n 'lasses."

"And if you do not do it well?"

"My yers git pinched."

"Go! A brilliant go-between! If there were not greater fools than he around me, the danger might be increased. Mais—bah! This America is a nation of fools—simple fools—too simple to be anything but honest. And yet, the greatest fool I know—is Emile Girardeau!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A REQUIEM TERMINATING IN A PEAN.

"Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen and cold
and relentless,
Thoughts of what might have been, and the weight
and woe of his errand;
All the dreams that had faded, and all the hopes that
had vanished."

—Longfellow.

But one more day remained to Delphine, in which to loosen and cast from her all the ties, great and small, which bound her to a world, with which, of late, she had grown so bitterly dissatisfied. The morrow would bring Father Richards.

Her extremity had been his opportunity. And with him were to come so many good and pleasant things. Peace, daily companionship with the best and purest of her own sex, a life of placid usefulness, and above all, relief from the dread responsibility of shaping her own course, manufacturing her own creed. There were wise and holy men where she was going to lay down gentle but inviolable laws for her spiritual guidance. She had found the church that would take care of her.

Still, this week had not been a joyous one. The joyousness was all to come. She has yet to learn that "Man never is, but always to be, blessed." She did not find it easy to speak freely of the great change so soon to come into her life, much less to tell all her astonished hearers the why of her resolution. It was bitter-sweet to see the great and unspeakable sorrow surging up over poor old "Dan's" rough face, until he hid it in the big hands that had labored faithfully and affectionately in the service of the little lady, who was going to turn her back upon them in a desertion worse than death, and shed the first tears that had wet his cheeks since the master died. After all, then, she was smiting some tender hearts sorely. But she had put her hand to the plough, and she must not look back.

Ever mindful of the filial respect which was all the poor substitute her sincere nature had yet afforded for filial affection, she had penetrated into her mother's disorderly obscurity, immediately after her priestly uncle's departure to impart her information.

She found that lady had promptly substituted her unfinished novel for the

rosary which had been most conspicuous during the "Father's" sojourn, and was joined unto her idols once more.

Simply and coldly, Della informed her mother of her fixed resolve to retire from the world.

"A nun! My handsome daughter in serge and a funny white bonnet." Madame laughs that harsh, scoffing laugh of hers, which is but an audible sneer.

"You will not miss me, mother. For though you came all the way across the ocean to hunt me up, I have long since known that I was not at all necessary to your happiness. I do not want to reproach you, for I suppose it is neither your fault nor mine that we could not bring the love that should be between us at our bidding. God knows I have tried—tried and failed. This house, of course, will always be your home. I shall ask my guardian to substitute your name for mine in my quarterly remittance."

"Ask your guardian!" The laugh and the sneer are gone, and in their place a frightened, hunted look fills her mother's beautiful eyes.

"More correctly, write to him. I never expect to see him. But that will not interfere with my desire to secure you against want. You know I am not rich, mother, but the remittance upon which we have both managed to live, will suffice you—even including your novels." The girl's voice is fuller than her words of scorn.

Mrs. Staunton realizes that she is in earnest at last. A face full of perplexity is turned upon Della.

"My child. Delphine. You do not mean this. I listened at first at what I thought girlish petulance. You do not know what you are doing. You do not know what you are throwing away. Marry! Marry Emile Girardeau, and you will bless the first voice that was raised in protest against your sacrifice. I"—

"Stop, mother! I did not come here to reopen old issues. Do not provoke me into saying anything unkind. I am not as happy as I was before you came. I do know what I am throwing away. I simply came as a matter of form to tell you what I am about to do. We will be together one week longer, then you will be alone. Not more so, however, than I have been, ever since I have been dependent upon you for companionship."

She was gone, leaving her mother for once not ready with a biting retort.

"A week! Much may be done in seven days! Yes, much, if one had anything better than two obstinate fools to work upon." Madame lays aside her novel; the charm of it is broken. She has work to do—earnest, hard, protracted brain work!

To the Samuels Delphine dared not go. She sent a simple message to the minister, that she should take her organ lesson on Thursday evening, if it pleased him. (On Friday morning Father Richards was to return.)

She went quite early to the little church on the Thursday she had appointed. She wanted the house and the organ all to herself—she wanted no lamps lighted—she wanted no human voice to question, no human ear to listen, no human eye to pry upon her in this, her supreme moment. It was her own requiem she had come there to play; and as the soft, full melody of the instrument swelled upon the air, her whole life seemed setting itself as the words to the tender, pleading rhythm of the music. Now, wailing slow and plaintive through her orphaned infancy, then, in leisurely graceful adagio through the peace-crowned days of early childhood, tripping in light staccato of the love-sunned years of girlhood, dying into a solemn largo over her shorn and desolated years, swelling at last into an anthem of triumph over the proud, glad day to come.

The anthem was ended, but the player with clasped hands and bowed head, swayed forward in a tempest of conflicting emotions.

A firm, quick tread upon the steps that lead up to the organ-loft sends a thrill of nervous dread through the girl's slender form.

"He is coming—coming for his answer. How firmly he treads. It is the proud footfall of a conqueror!"

A hand is laid very gently on her bowed head—a voice trembling with its weight of feeling, calls her name.

She raises her head, but not to look at him—only to let her words go up to him where he stands there, over her, clearly, distinctly, so that she may not have to repeat them.

"You have come to me for your answer. Please forgive me for the pain I am about to cause you. I am going with Father Richards tomorrow to become a nun. That is the best and surest

way out of all my troubles. I shall never be anyone's wife. There, I have answered you."

"Sister Azubah, look upward—always upward!"

She obeys the voice, which is not the pastor's voice.

"Max!"

Clearly, gladly, triumphantly, his name rings out upon the evening air, and then she is cradled in the strong arms that are pressing her close, closer to a heart, true enough and manly enough to meet all the anxious exactments of that long-dead father.

Mr. Samuels had come for his answer and had received it. One monosyllable had answered him. That glad-ringing "Max" that had thrilled the returned Bohemian with the fullness of perfected happiness, had fallen with joy-killing distinctness upon the gentle pastor's ears, as he sat in the large chair within the chancel, listening to the girl's inspired performance, not caring to go to her until the wonderful melody should die of its own sweetness.

For one short moment he stood there irresolute, his eyes fastened with a sorrowful fascination upon the two figures up in the organ-loft. This bronzed, kingly intruder held her unresisting form in a tender embrace, her beautiful head lay pillowed peacefully on another's shoulder.

"She has found what she wanted. She does not need me," he says to himself very softly. Then, turning him about, he leaves the church quietly, so that they may never know that another eye had rested even for one second on the solemn joy of their meeting.

He does not leave the church altogether. In the privacy of the vestry-room he kneels and prays very fervently for the power to conquer this one love of his life—a love, as pure and sinless as that life; but now, in a moment, become guilt. Prays that "time may lay his hand upon his heart, gently, not smiting it, but, as a harper lays his open palm upon his harp to deaden its vibration."

And while he is praying there in secret, the woman he loves is looking up into the proud, happy face of Maxwell Morgan (her own transfigured by the mightiness of her love and happiness into a starry radiance), and is saying in the old bright way:

"But, Max, I am not worth the having."

A woman who has succeeded so poorly in making anything in particular of herself, who thought, not half an hour ago, that she was yearning after holiness, when all the time she was just yearning for you—a woman who is standing here so happy, that she's grown heartlessly indifferent to the unhappiness you you are compelling her to inflict upon one of the best and truest of men—a woman who has given away all her worldly possession and said to everybody 'good-by,' and now has to unsay it. Oh, Max, what a ridiculous sort of woman I am. I repeat it, I am not worth the having."

"It is because I am afraid others may come to the same mortifying conclusion, that I am going to take you myself, Sister Azubah."

"But, Max, I am not a Catholic, nor an Episcopalian, nor anything."

"Yes you are, my darling," Max says, very tenderly, adding, more gravely, "and, as for the rest of it, my own, remember that—"

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things, both great and small."

"But what shall I say to Father Richards?"

"Nothing. I shall tell him that I have appropriated the material from which he would have manufactured a very poor nun, to convert into a very good wife."

Then he draws her hand within his arm and together they leave the church.

"He prayeth best who loveth best," Della repeats, softly. "After all, Max, what is religion but love, love but religion? It is so easy to be good when one is happy."

And if not orthodox my heroine is right.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR.

—“Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.”

—Shakespeare.

M. Emile Girardeau, returning to his lodgings after an absence of several days, found upon his table a letter addressed in the delicate chirography of Mrs. William Staunton, written in the French language.

He seemed in no great haste to discover what Madame had to say. In fact, Mad-

ame's notes came too often to be very welcome, and treated generally of subjects that were none too pleasant in themselves.

So he proceeded very deliberately about the toilette upon which he was depending as a powerful auxiliary in bringing the object of his most ardent devotion to terms.

He was in the most serene frame of mind; nay, rather a triumphant frame of mind. This little absence of his had been in consequence of a very attractive advertisement, in which great pecuniary advantages were offered to any gentleman capable of carrying on a correspondence in the French language. He had presented himself as an applicant for the position with the happiest results.

The time had come at last when he could honorably woo sweet Lucy Samuels with a reasonable hope of success. In fact, immediately after one success in life, we are apt to grow conceited and vainglorious, presumptuously concluding that because the wheel of fortune has given one revolution in our favor it will continue to whirl obedient to our wishes until all our little schemes and plans are comfortably adjusted.

M. Emile's exultant frame of mind was altogether the result of this popular fallacy. At last his toilette was accomplished, and, complacently sure of his own utter irresistibility, he turned towards Mrs. Staunton's long-neglected communication, muttering between his white, gleaming teeth, something about deliverance and escape from eternal torment. This is what Madame had to say:

"I have done all that one unsustained party could towards the fulfilment of a contract. Things are rapidly approaching a crisis. When dotards of eighty years find it necessary to cross the ocean in search of health, it is 'sauve qui pent.'

Nothing can come between a man and his wife. Fortune is still possible for you. Flight is your only alternative. I pity you. If it comes to flight without an opportunity to gratify your kind heart by bidding your friends farewell, remember that no man dare violate an oath sworn to upon a Bible clasped in the hands of the dead. She carried your vows straight into the Presence! - You have seven days in which to mend matters."

From trembling, nervous hands the note fluttered down on the carpet, and lay there while the reader of it, livid

with terror, white with the agony of this great revulsion from the pinnacle of happy expectation to the deepest hell of despair, called down murderous curses upon the writer of it.

"Prompter! Temptress! Circe! Devil! I curse you. Lost, eternally lost! Condemned of all mankind! Scorned by Lucy!"

He stoops and recovers the fateful note. With the deliberation of despair he reads it once more.

"'Sauve qui pent.' Flight! One narrow door still open!"

With all the complacency gone from his handsome face—with all its vaingloriousness shrunken into abject fear—with cold and trembling hands, he fills a small travelling satchel with the merest necessities. Only once he pauses in his hurried task to fill himself a glass of wine, into which he pours some drops from a vial upon the mantel. "I need them. My nerves else will fail me. I must husband my strength." He feels braver, stronger, after the wine, and flings himself upon the lounge to deliberate.

A knock at his own bed-room door startles him into a sitting posture.

A husky "Come in" is answered by Paul Weyland's entrance.

"It is you! My friend! How can I say how glad"—he breaks his welcome abruptly off, and the bright look of relief which had overspread his face when Paul's tall form had answered his summons, fades quickly away, giving place to an ashen look of fear.

Sternly erect, disdaining the proffer of his one-time friend's extended hand, the Judge's son looks down upon him, as he sinks tremblingly upon the lounge once more, coldly, disdainfully, with a scornful disgust spreading over his own bright features.

"Control yourself sufficiently to answer half a dozen questions, Monsieur, which your tell-tale agitation have rendered almost superfluous. For your own sake I advise calmness."

"For your own sake!" There was a promise, a vague hint of a promise in the words, which reassured the volatile soul of the Frenchman, and helped him to that calmness which Paul demanded.

"Pardon!" he murmurs, clearing his throat nervously, to rid himself of the huskiness which so impeded his utterance. "I have been much discomposed

today. My friend's face does not look kindly; he—"

"I am not here, M. Girardeau, as your friend. I am here simply to make some inquiries relative to a matter upon which I have been questioned recently. May I inquire how this letter of introduction came in your possession?" With which, the letter which had opened the Lodge doors and its chivalrous master's heart to the unknown foreigner, was thrown upon the table for his inspection.

No answer came to his questioning. Looking into the Frenchman's face, Paul beheld it suddenly convulsed with a spasm of mortal agony. Springing from his lounge the wretched man seized the vial from which he had rashly poured the drops which were to give him strength. In his excitement he had taken the wrong vial from the shelf.

"And this is the narrow door of escape!" he murmurs, heaving one despairing sigh. Then he returns to his lounge, strangely calm, pitifully resigned.

"I have waited very patiently for your answer, M. Girardeau. Are you ready with it?"

"Yes. What would you know? I was in pain. I shall be again presently. Be quick with your questions, or I may leave them unanswered. See," he adds, touching his filled satchel with his varnished boot, "I was making preparation for a journey when you came in. I shall start on my journey presently—a longer one than I had planned—mais n'importe."

"Perhaps not," mutters Paul under his mustache, thinking of two stalwart officers down stairs, ready to do his bidding, in case his friend up stairs refused to satisfy his curiosity.

"You obtained the entrance into my house and my friendship by means of that letter of introduction from my old college-mate, Mr. Brieslow. I wish to know how you came by that letter."

"Hold! You lawyers are tiresome. I suffer. My sufferings increase. Take out your note-book, and record quickly my last deposition. You are here in M. Brousseau's interests. Am I not right?"

"You are." Paul seats himself, note-book in hand.

"I am. I was the confidential clerk of M. Brousseau. He trusted me and I was worthy of

his trust. He despatched me to America with a twofold object. I was to escort your cousin's mother to her friends, and then make collection of some moneys due him by a New York firm. My room-mate on board ship was one Emile Girardeau, who was coming to this country to retrieve his fortunes. We grew intimate, then confidential. On board the vessel he made a firm friend of an invalided millionaire who persuaded him to change his plan of coming to this Southern country, and, instead, to attach himself to him as his Secretary. Before leaving the vessel he cleared his pocket of some superfluous papers, among them his now useless letter of introduction to you, which lay on the floor of my stateroom. A woman tempted me to the first vile act of my life. I was to collect the money due my master, but not to return to France with it. Instead, I was to come South with her and woo a beautiful and wealthy Southern girl. I listened. He who listens even to the devil is lost. The woman had plans of her own in which she succeeded. Mine have failed. I rushed to my stateroom, there to think over her devilish suggestions. That letter stared me in the face, helping her, making easier of performance her dark plan. I have nothing more to tell you. M. Brousseau's defaulting clerk is before you. Emile Girardeau is—Heaven only knows where. Tell my master for me that—"

"Wait!" Paul looks up sternly from his note-book. "Remember, it is a deposition, not a confession I am taking down."

"Pardon, my friend, it is a confession," says the foreigner with a strange wistful smile.

"I have but one question more to ask before handing you over to the proper authorities. You came with my aunt, Mrs. Staunton?"

"No more. I have told you all that concerns me, Henri Gustave Lempriere. What concerns another, that other a woman, must—" he is silent—once more spasms of pain contract his brow, and great drops stand out upon his pallid forehead.

"Henri Gustave Lempriere, it becomes my sad but imperative duty to hand you over to the proper authorities for commitment before the courts of the state for felony as a defaulter," says the young lawyer, addressing his prisoner in a voice of sorrowful sternness.

Henri Gustave Lempriere bows in silent acquiescence, and Paul leaves the room to summon his officers.

They came. But it is to find that the

proper authorities have been forestalled by a higher authority, and the soul of the prisoner has been summoned into the high court of Heaven, there to plead guilty before the Supreme Judge of the nations.

* * * * *

Paul had left M. Brousseau at the Homestead, anxiously awaiting the result of his inquiries. But the "dotard," who had come across the ocean in search of health, as Mrs. Staunton had put it, was not the man to sit with idly-folded hands while others attended to his business for him. Miles Standish's neglected motto was his: "If you want a thing done well, do it yourself."

Quite a warm friendship had sprung up between him and Mr. Morgan during the latter's stay in Paris. Delphine Staunton and her interests had been a sort of bond between them. It had become to be quite a matter of course that portions (impersonal portions) of Della's diaries should be read out to her venerable guardian. The frequent mention of M. Emile Girardeau's name had at first attracted his curiosity, then excited his suspicions.

Believing Delphine's Frenchman, whom "some secret trouble was oppressing," and his own defaulting clerk to be the same man, he wrote to the wife of his friend, and asked her to aid him in a matter wherein the American detective force had proven powerless. "Would Mrs. Staunton give him any information she might be possessed of relative to the whereabouts of his once-trusted clerk, Henri Gustave Lampriere?"

And Mrs. Staunton, flinging the dotard's letter of inquiry into the fire with a contemptuous exclamation, had made prompt answer to the effect:

"That M. Brousseau must pardon her if she acknowledged that, owing to the extreme weakness of her body and mind, while his clerk was acting as her escort she had kept herself in utter seclusion, only seeing that young man when change of conveyance, or other necessary matters brought them together. After reaching New York he had neglected her shamefully, seeming to be altogether taken up with private affairs of his own; and, had it not been for the kindness of the New Yorkers with whom she had travelled, she would have been sadly perplexed how to proceed on her way to her darling child. The desertion

of your business interests," she concludes, "is only paralleled by his desertion of my own helpless self, in that big, strange city. I do not believe, if I were brought face to face with your M. Henri Gustave Lampriere, I should recognize him so absorbed was I in my own private anxieties."

Thus replying, Mrs. Staunton secured herself against all contingencies.

Not satisfied either with the American detective force, or Mrs. Staunton's ready reply, M. Brousseau informed Mr. Morgan of his intention to return with him to America to prosecute the search in person. And for the detection of his defaulting clerk Max was retained at a magnificent price in case of success.

Together, he, Mr. Morgan and Paul Weyland, had repaired to the Homestead on the Thursday evening which had proven so fateful in various ways to Delphine Staunton, Mr. Samuels, Henri Gustave Lampriere and Maxwell Morgan.

Paul had left for M. Girardeau's lodgings, and Max for the church, leaving M. Brousseau seated in the parlor, waiting for the down-coming of Mrs. Staunton, to whom he had sent up his card by Toney.

When Mr. Morgan, with his promised wife hanging upon his arm, returned to the house some hours later, they found him still alone.

Warmly and affectionately he greeted his ward, drawing her into his arms, and pressing a fatherly kiss upon her rosy cheeks.

"You have seen my mother?" Delphine asks, glancing about in vain for that lady.

"No, I am not so fortunate," M. Brousseau says, picking out his sparse collection of English words very deliberately. "Madame is malade. As for me, I despair. If Madame would but permit me one little moment in interview. So much hangs upon it. I must see her. I am ruined, else."

"Perhaps I can persuade her to receive you in her room. She is a great invalid. I will try."

"Mother," says Delphine, gently, for she is happy now, and she does not feel coldly or unkindly to even the meanest thing that walks. "Mother, M. Brousseau is below. He regrets your illness, but begs you will allow him an interview. He cannot remain longer than this even-

ing. He says unless you will allow him to ask you some questions he will be ruined. I do not know what it all means. It may be only his extravagant Frenchy way of putting things. But as he was dear father's friend, will you not put aside your own feelings for this once, and let me bring him up?"

Madame is lying upon her lounge. The room is so dark that Della cannot see how white and haggard her mother's features are. Her voice is shrill and excited, as she makes sudden reply:

"Girl, are you all banded together against me? I tell you I am ill. I cannot see your guardian. I will not see him. Go away from me. You want to put me in the madhouse again. Go, tell him I am ill."

Delphine turns away sadly to obey.

"Stop." Mother and daughter remain quite still for a painfully long moment. "Bring me my white Nubia. This poor face is racked with torture. There, wrap it about my brow. Closer, closer. Now let fall the curtains. The light maddens me when this cruel neuralgia seizes on me. Now listen. I sacrifice myself to your wishes. Go to your guardian. Tell him I am ill, I suffer; but if his interests are wavering upon my words he may come. He must promise not to stay long—not to ask for a second interview. As much as I wish to befriend one who was dear to your precious father, my own welfare demands that I shall be left in quietness and seclusion."

Delphine leaves the room to repeat her words to M. Brousseau.

Closer, still closer about her aching face the sufferer draws the soft woollen cloud, until nothing but her lustrous eyes are visible.

"Sauve qui peut," she murmurs, sighing wearily as she turns her face towards the darkest side of the room.

And presently Delphine enters, accompanied by M. Brousseau and Maxwell Morgan.

"I must go with you," Max had said very firmly, with a strange light coming into his face. "If I am to be your lawyer, I must take this lady's deposition in person."

M. Brousseau stumbles forward, pioneered through the darkness by Delphine, until she sees him safely seated in a chair close by the sufferer's lounge; then she walks away to the window,

where Max has placed himself to wait until he is needed.

M. Brousseau clasps the little bird-claw extended to him in greeting, with friendly fervor, pouring out volubly, through the happy medium of his own native tongue, his regrets at her continued ill health.

The sufferer murmurs plaintive responses. Then the "dotard" begins a rigid catechism which shows him in full possession of his business wits at any rate. Madame's replies come promptly and unhesitatingly. The man of business suspects that the man of law may think of some interrogatory which has not suggested itself to him. He raises his voice and calls: "Monsieur Max!"

Max has never learned to write in the dark. Unmindful of the suffering God's bright sunlight will cause, with a quick agolpgy he flings wide the shutters and lets it stream upon the lounge, towards which he walks firmly, quickly, boldly, with that strange look of expectancy in his eyes.

"Maxwell Morgan here! Traitor!" she rises upon her lounge in tigerish wrath, her glistening eyes fastened upon Della's pale face. The woollen cloud falls away from her own face. M. Brousseau looks upon the revealed features in bewilderment—looks again, and finds voice at last:

"*This is not William Staunton's wife!*"

Then Maxwell Morgan takes the whole matter into his own hands.

"I knew it! I knew," he says, with merciless severity, looking the woman with untrustworthy eyes sternly in the face. "I knew that this woman could not be Delphine Staunton's mother. To tell me who you are, and the manner and motive of this imposture, is all that remains to you."

"And then," she says, glaring upon the group like a hunted thing at bay, "what shall my sentence be?"

"To the tender mercies of her whom alone you have injured, shall that be left," Mr. Morgan makes answer, drawing Della's trembling form within his supporting arm.

"Delphine, then, to you I make confession. I am the cousin who took true and tender care of your unfortunate mother. That is all the claim I have upon your mercy. That mother died on ship-board. In her last moment she placed her wedding

ring, your father's picture, and her marriage certificate together with other papers in my possession, asking me to bring them on to her daughter. The devil whispered me how easy it would be to personate that mother, and secure to myself a position which would never be accorded me otherwise. We buried her at sea with her Bible clasped in her hands. On that Bible my bought tool and accomplice, Henri Gustave Lempriere, swore that no earthly power should ever make him reveal the fact of Celestine Staunton's death. The reward for his constancy was to be your hand and ultimately your fortune. My plans were well laid, and they would have sufficed for my life-long ease had it not been for you, Maxwell Morgan—you who distrusted me from the first—you who have detected me at last! Now, do your worst." With sullen despair she turned her glittering eyes upon Delphine once more, and silence reigned supreme until a voice as soft and gentle as the voice of an angel sent to bring tidings of great peace to erring man, said:

"You were kind and good once to my mother. For her sake, her daughter says, go in peace!"

CONCLUSION.

With the coming day came Father Richards, and he took away from the Homestead a broken-spirited, weary woman. She had played a game of hazard, and had lost. Sullen resentment against Maxwell Morgan, and a shame-faced disinclination to look into Della's brave eyes was all the noticeable change about her at first, but when Paul Weyland brought to the Homestead the pitiful story of Henri Lempriere's death, an agony of remorse seized upon her, and, when the holy man came to take Delphine with him to the peaceful seclusion of the convent, the wretched woman besought his intercession with offended Heaven and asked only that her days might be prolonged until she had won pardon for the ruin of that unhappy man.

It was not until after the departure of her priestly uncle and the subsidence of the tumultuous excitement incident upon the strange revelation that left her once more motherless, that Delphine

came sufficiently out of herself to ask:

"Has Mr. Samuels been here, Max? You know he is still waiting for his answer, and I dread it."

"It is the one matter in which I cannot aid my darling. See, he is coming back with Paul. I will leave you until you have told him."

"No!" and she grasps his arm convulsively. "Stay with me, Max. He is so gentle, so good, it is such keen pain to inflict a disappointment upon him, he who has asked so little of a world to which he has given so much."

"I think he asked for a great deal when he asked for my Della's hand."

"Yes, but—" They were pacing the terrace, and, turning, found it was too late for Max to leave, or for Delphine to finish her sentence.

Mr. Samuels was close to them. Paul had disappeared down a side walk. The pastor held out a hand to each of them, and his holy eyes rested on them as calmly, as beneficently as if no happy dream of ever making this beautiful girl his wife had ever disturbed the quiet tenor of his life.

"May I not add my voice to others which have already bidden you God-speed upon your new path in life? You have found what you wanted, Delphine, and the love and kindness which have come into your life will never fail you, I am sure. You, Mr. Morgan have come Heaven-guided. Paul has told me how near we came to losing her. To you I can resign her with a smile—to a convent with a sigh. Cherish her as I should have done had it been permitted me, and, 'she shall do you good and not evil all the days of her life.'"

Then he went away from them, leaving Della's bright eyes shining through unshed tears, and Max filled with reverent admiration for his manliness and his bravery.

The next time they saw him was in the little church, when he stood before them in his robes of office to join together in the sight of God and man Paul Weyland and fair-haired Lucy Samuels, Maxwell Morgan and Delphine Staunton.

No mortal eye could have detected anything more than the solemn emotion attendant upon the giving away a cherished member of his own household, in the pastor's serene face and gentle,

low-toned voice. But he who seeth in secret knew that the cup tasted very bitter, even to the lips of his faithful servant, who put away from him on that day the first and last dream of a wife-blessed home, a helper in the good work, and bowing his head submissively under a heavy yoke, said: "Not mine, but Thy will, oh Lord!"

And at last Sergeant Danbury is happy. For the little lady is happy. When the old Homestead was filled from garret to ground floor with the friends who came about her in her great joy, the Judge and Aunt Catharine, Eleanor and Evelyn, and M. Brousseau, and Paul with his bride, the old Sergeant was in his element. The resources that he and Mother Danbury developed were marvellous, or perhaps it was because smiling content sat with them at the board, and wandered at her own sweet will among the guests that everything seemed so bright and pleasant and altogether satisfactory.

M. Brousseau remained in this country just long enough to discover that the heart is never too old to love, and made Eleanor an offer, which would have been ridiculous but for its earnest sincerity.

"I am not young, but then no man is past making a woman happy at fifty. I adore you. Marry me, and all that wealth can do to aid affection shall be done to perfect your happiness."

Hercalm eyes never left his face while he was speaking. She did not smile, for he was in manly earnest. She did not blush, for she was a wise, clear-brained woman. She simply returned him a kind but positive "No," not deeming it necessary to tell him that she, like the gentle pastor who had met his fate at Della's hands, recognized but one true, absorbing, deathless love as possible.

But one cloud has darkened the sunlight that has beamed steadily about the Homestead ever since Max's home-coming. That one cloud was so soft and and white and fleeting that it was gone ere its presence as a cloud was well recognized.

It was the painless, peaceful death of Mother Danbury, who went before to show them how a Christian could die. When her summons came they were all gathered about her—all that she loved on earth. There was a radiance about the withered face that robbed Death of its terrors, and Della gazed down upon it with a strange fascination.

The last moments were given to good and wise counsel—counsel dignified by the Awful Presence above the narrow details that had filled the poor, untaught precisionist's days too full. But the hour of her triumph had come, and she looked the Angel of Death bravely, fearlessly in the face.

"Mother," says the Sergeant, bringing his tall figure down close to the poor form lying there helpless and worn, "is there any help you ask? Any one you would wish to come and make the road clearer for you? The minister, perhaps."

She turns her sightless eyes upward—not to Dan—far away, above him—but her words are for him—strong, brave words that comfort him when she is gone.

"No, I need no one, son. I am not afraid. I am quite sure of my welcome." Then clearly, sweetly, comes her last earthly utterance:

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
Oh, Lamb of God, I come."

THE END.

1. fiction, English

FOUL PLAY.

A NOVEL.

BY

CHARLES READE.

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FOUL PLAY.

CHAPTER I.

THERE are places which appear at first sight inaccessible to romance: and such a place was Mr. Wardlaw's dining-room in Russell Square. It was very large, had sickly green walls, picked out with aldermen, full length; heavy maroon curtains; mahogany chairs; a turkey carpet an inch thick: and was lighted with wax candles only.

In the centre, bristling and gleaming with silver and glass, was a round table, at which fourteen could have dined comfortably; and at opposite sides of this table sat two gentlemen, who looked as neat, grave, precise, and unromantic, as the place; Merchant Wardlaw, and his son.

Wardlaw senior was an elderly man, tall, thin, iron-gray, with a round head, a short, thick neck, a good, brown eye, a square jaw that betokened resolution, and a complexion so sallow as to be almost cadaverous. Hard as iron: but a certain stiff dignity and respectability sat upon him, and became him.

Arthur Wardlaw resembled his father in figure, but his mother in face. He had, and has, hay-colored hair, a forehead singularly white and delicate, pale blue eyes, largish ears, finely chiselled features, the under lip much shorter than the upper; his chin oval and pretty, but somewhat receding; his complexion beautiful. In short, what nineteen people out of twenty would call a handsome young man, and think they had described him.

Both the Wardlaws were in full dress, according to the invariable custom of the house; and sat in a dead silence, that seemed natural to the great, sober room.

This, however, was not for want of a topic; on the contrary, they had a matter of great importance to discuss, and in fact this was why they dined *tête-à-tête*: but their tongues were tied for the present; in the first place, there stood in the middle of the table an epergne, the size of a Putney laurel-tree; neither Wardlaw could well see the other, without craning out his neck like a rifleman from behind his tree: and then there were three live suppressors of confidential intercourse, two gorgeous footmen, and a sombre, sublime, and, in one word, episcopal, butler; all three went about as softly as cats after a robin, and conjured one plate away, and smoothly

insinuated another, and seemed models of grave discretion: but were known to be all ears, and bound by a secret oath to carry down each crumb of dialogue to the servants' hall, for curious dissection, and boisterous ridicule.

At last, however, those three smug hypocrites retired, and, by good luck, transferred their suffocating epergne to the sideboard; so then father and son looked at one another with that conscious anxiety which naturally precedes a topic of interest; and Wardlaw senior invited his son to try a certain decanter of rare old port, by way of preliminary.

While the young man fills his glass, hurl we in his antecedents.

At school till fifteen, and then clerk in his father's office till twenty-two, and showed an aptitude so remarkable, that John Wardlaw, who was getting tired, determined, sooner or later, to put the reins of government into his hands. But he conceived a desire that the future head of his office should be an university man. So he announced his resolution, and to Oxford went young Wardlaw, though he had not looked at Greek or Latin for seven years. He was, however, furnished with a private tutor, under whom he recovered lost ground rapidly. The Reverend Robert Penfold was a first-class man, and had the gift of teaching. The house of Wardlaw had peculiar claims on him, for he was the son of old Michael Penfold, Wardlaw's cashier; he learned from young Wardlaw the stake he was playing for, and instead of merely giving him one hour's lecture per day, as he did to his other pupils, he used to come to his rooms at all hours, and force him to read, to read with him. He also stood his friend in a serious emergency. Young Wardlaw, you must know, was blessed or cursed with Mimicry; his powers, that way really seemed to have no limit, for he could imitate any sound you liked with his voice, and any form with his pen or pencil. Now, you promise you, he was one man under his father's eye, and another down at Oxford; so, one night, the gentleman, being warm with wine, opens his window, and, seeing a group of undergraduates chattering and smoking in the quadrangle, imitates the peculiar grating tones of Mr. Champion, vice-president of the college, and gives them various reasons why they ought to disperse to their rooms and study. "But, perhaps," says he, in conclusion, "you are to

blind drunk to read Bosh in crooked letters by candle-light? In that case—" And he then gave them some very naughty advice how to pass the evening; still in the exact tones of Mr. Champion, who was a very, very strict moralist; and this unexpected sally of wit caused shrieks of laughter, and nightly tickled all the hearers, except Champion, who was listening and disapproving at another window. He complained to the president. Then the ingenious Wardlaw, not having come down to us in a direct line from Bayard, committed a great mistake,—he denied it.

It was brought home to him, and the president, who had laughed in his sleeve at the practical joke, looked very grave at the falsehood; Rustication was talked of and even Expulsion. Then Wardlaw came sorrowfully to Penfold, and said to him, "I must have been awfully cut, for I don't remember all that; I had been wining at Christchurch. I do remember slanging the fellows, but how can I tell what I said? I say, old fellow, it will be a bad job for me if they expel me, or even rusticate me; my father will never forgive me; I shall be his clerk, but never his partner; and then he will find out what a lot I owe down here. I'm done for! I'm done for!"

Penfold uttered not a word, but grasped his hand, and went off to the president, and said his pupil had erred at Christchurch, and could not be expected to remember minutely. Mimicry was, unfortunately, a habit with him. He then pleaded for the milder construction, with such zeal and eloquence, that the high-minded scholar he was addressing admitted that construction was possible, and therefore must be received. So the affair ended in a written apology to Mr. Champion, which had all the smoothness and neatness of a merchant's letter. Arthur Wardlaw was already a master in that style.

Six months after this, and one fortnight before the actual commencement of our tale, Arthur Wardlaw, well crammed by Penfold, went up for his final examination, throbbing with anxiety. He passed; and was so grateful to his tutor that, when the advowson of a small living near Oxford came into the market, he asked Wardlaw senior to lend Robert Penfold a sum of money, much more than was needed: and Wardlaw senior declined without moment's hesitation.

This slight sketch will serve as a key to the dialogue it has postponed, and to subsequent incidents.

"Well, Arthur, and so you have really taken your degree?"

"No, sir; but I have passed my examination: the degree follows as a matter of course,—that is a mere question of fees."

"Oh! Then now I have something to say to you. Try one more glass of the '47 port. Stop; you'll excuse me; I am a man of business; I don't doubt your word; Heaven forbid! but, do you happen to have any document you can produce in further confirmation of what you state; namely, that you have passed your final examination at the University?"

"Certainly, sir"; replied young Wardlaw. "My Testamur."

"What is that?"

The young gentleman put his hand in his pocket, and produced his Testamur, or "We bear witness"; a short printed document in Latin, which may be thus translated:—

"We bear witness that Arthur Wardlaw, of St. Luke's College, has answered our questions in humane letters."

"GEORGE RICHARDSON,
"ARTHUR SMYTHE,
"EDWARD MERIVALE,
Examiners."

Wardlaw senior took it, laid it beside him on the table, inspected it with his double eye-glass, and, not knowing a word of Latin, was mightily impressed, and his respect for his son rose 40, or 45, per cent.

"Very well, sir"; said he. "Now listen to me. Perhaps it was an old man's fancy; but I have often seen in the world what a stamp these Universities put upon a man. To send you back from commerce to Latin and Greek, at two and twenty, was trying you rather hard; it was trying you doubly; your obedience, and your ability into the bargain. Well, sir, you have stood the trial, and I am proud of you. And so now it is my turn: from this day and from this hour, look on yourself as my partner in the old established house of Wardlaw. My balance-sheet shall be prepared immediately, and the partnership deed drawn. You will enter on a flourishing concern, sir; and you will virtually conduct it, in written communication with me; for I have had five and forty years of it: and then my liver, you know! Watson advises me strongly to leave my desk, and try country air, and rest from business and its cares."

He paused a moment; and the young man drew a long breath, like one who was in the act of being relieved of some terrible weight.

As for the old gentleman, he was not observing his son just then, but thinking of his own career; a certain expression of pain and regret came over his features; but he shook it off with manly dignity. "Come, come," said he, "this is the law of Nature, and must be submitted to with a good grace. Wardlaw junior, fill your glass." At the same time he stood up and said, stoutly, "The setting sun drinks to the rising sun"; but could not maintain that artificial style, and ended with, "God bless you, my boy, and may you stick to business; avoid speculation, as I have done; and so hand the concern down healthy to your son, as my father there (pointing to a picture) handed it down to me, and I to you."

His voice wavered slightly in uttering this benediction; but only for a moment: he then sat quietly down, and sipped his wine composedly.

Not so the other: his color came and went violently all the time his father was speaking, and, when he ceased, he sank into his chair with another sigh deeper than the last, and two half-hysterical tears came to his pale eyes.

But presently, feeling he was expected to say something, he struggled against all this mysterious emotion, and faltered out that he should not fear the responsibility, if he might have constant recourse to his father for advice.

"Why, of course," was the reply. "My country house is but a mile from the station: you can telephone for me in any case of importance."

"When would you wish me to commence my new duties?"

"Let me see, it will take six weeks to prepare a balance-sheet, such as I could be content to submit to an incoming partner. Say two months."

Young Wardlaw's countenance fell.

"Meantime you shall travel on the continent and enjoy yourself."

"Thank you," said young Wardlaw, mechanically, and fell into a brown study.

The room now returned to what seemed its natural state. And its silence continued until it was broken from without.

A sharp knocking was heard at the street-door, and resounded across the marble hall.

The Wardlaws looked at one another in some little surprise.

"I have invited nobody," said the elder.

Some time elapsed, and then a footman made his appearance, and brought in a card.

"Mr. Christopher Adams."

Now that Mr. Christopher Adams should call on John Wardlaw, in his private room, at nine o'clock in the evening, seemed to that merchant irregular, presumptuous, and monstrous. "Tell him he will find me at my place of business to-morrow, as usual," said he, knitting his brows.

The footman went off with this message; and, soon after, raised voices were heard in the hall, and the episcopal butler entered the room with an injured countenance.

"He says he must see you; he is in great anxiety."

"Yes, I am in great anxiety," said a quavering voice at his elbow; and Mr. Adams actually pushed by the butler, and stood, hat in hand, in those sacred precincts. "Pray excuse me, sir," said he, "but it is very serious; I can't be easy in my mind till I have put you a question."

"This is very extraordinary conduct, sir," said Mr. Wardlaw. "Do you think I do business here, and at all hours?"

"O no, sir: it is my own business. I am come to ask you a very serious question. I could not wait till morning with such a doubt on my mind."

"Well, sir, I repeat this is irregular and extraordinary; but as you are here, pray what is the matter?" He then dismissed the lingering butler with a look. Mr. Adams cast uneasy glances on young Wardlaw.

"O," said the elder, "you can speak before him. This is my partner; that is to say, he will be as soon as the balance-sheet can be prepared, and the deed drawn. Wardlaw junior, this is Mr. Adams, a very respectable bill-discounter."

The two men bowed to each other, and Arthur Wardlaw sat down motionless.

"Sir, did you draw a note of hand to-day?" inquired Adams of the elder merchant.

"I dare say I did. Did you discount one signed by me?"

"Yes, sir, we did."

"Well, sir, you have only to present it at maturity. Wardlaw and Son will provide for it, I dare say." This with the lofty nonchalance of a rich man, who had never broken an engagement in his life.

"Ah, that I know they will if it is all right; but suppose it is not?"

"What'd ye mean?" asked Wardlaw, with some astonishment.

"O, nothing, sir! It bears your signature, that is good for twenty times the amount; and it is indorsed by your cashier. Only what makes me a little uneasy, your bills used to be always on your own forms, and so I told my partner; he discounted it. Gentlemen, I wish you would just look at it."

"Of course we will look at it. Show it Arthur first; his eyes are younger than mine."

Mr. Adams took out a large bill-book, extracted the note of hand, and passed it across the table to

Wardlaw junior. He took it up with a sort of shiver, and bent his head very low over it; then handed it back in silence.

Adams took it to Wardlaw senior, and laid it before him, by the side of Arthur's Testamur.

The merchant inspected it with his glasses.

"The writing is mine, apparently."

"I am very glad of it," said the bill-broker, eagerly.

"Stop a bit," said Mr. Wardlaw. "Why, what is this? For two thousand pounds! and, as you say, not my form. I have signed no note for two thousand pounds this week. Dated yesterday. You have not cashed it, I hope?"

"I am sorry to say my partner has."

"Well, sir, not to keep you in suspense, the thing is not worth the stamp it is written on."

"Mr. Wardlaw!—Sir!—Good heavens! Then it is as I feared. It is a forgery."

"I should be puzzled to find any other name for it. You need not look so pale, Arthur. We can't help some clever scoundrel imitating our hands; and as for you, Adams, you ought to have been more cautious."

"But, sir, your cashier's name is Penfold," faltered the holder, clinging to a straw. "May he not have drawn—is the indorsement forged as well?"

Mr. Wardlaw examined the back of the bill, and looked puzzled. "No," said he. "My cashier's name is Michael Penfold, but this is indorsed 'Robert Penfold.' Do you hear, Arthur? Why, what is the matter with you? You look like a ghost. I say there is your tutor's name at the back of this forged note. This is very strange. Just look, and tell me who wrote these two words 'Robert Penfold'?"

Young Wardlaw took the document, and tried to examine it calmly, but it shook visibly in his hand, and a cold moisture gathered on his brow. His pale eyes roved to and fro in a very remarkable way; and he was so long before he said anything, that both the other persons present began to eye him with wonder.

At last he faltered out, "This 'Robert Penfold' seems to me very like his own handwriting. But then the rest of the writing is equally like yours, sir. I am sure Robert Penfold never did anything wrong. Mr. Adams, please oblige me. Let this go no further till I have seen him, and asked him whether he indorsed it."

"Now don't you be in a hurry," said the elder Wardlaw. "The first question is, who received the money!"

Mr. Adams replied that it was a respectable looking man, a young clergyman.

"Ah!" said Wardlaw, with a world of meaning.

"Father!" said young Wardlaw, imploringly, "for my sake, say no more to-night. Robert Penfold is incapable of a dishonest act."

"It becomes your years to think so, young man. But I have lived long enough to see what crimes respectable men are betrayed into in the hour of temptation. And, now I think of it, this Robert Penfold is in want of money. Did he not ask me for a loan of two thousand pounds? Was not that the very sum? Can't you answer me? Why, then, the application came through you."

Receiving no reply from his son, but a sort of agonized stare, he took out his pencil and wrote down Robert Penfold's address. This he handed the bill-broker, and gave him some advice in a whisper, which Mr. Christopher Adams received with a pro-

fusion of thanks, and bustled away, leaving Wardlaw senior excited and indignant, Wardlaw junior, ghastly pale, and almost stupefied.

Scarcely a word was spoken for some minutes, and then the younger man broke out suddenly: "Robert Penfold is the best friend I ever had; I should have been expelled, but for him, and I should never have earned that Testamur but for him."

The old merchant interrupted him. "You exaggerate: but, to tell the truth, I am sorry now I did not lend him the money you asked for. For, mark my words, in a moment of temptation, that miserable young man has forged my name, and will be convicted of the felony, and punished accordingly."

"No, no: O, God forbid!" shrieked young Wardlaw. "I could not bear it. If he did, he must have intended to replace it. I must see him; I will see him directly." He got up all in a hurry, and was going to Penfold to warn him, and get him out of the way till the money should be replaced. But his father started up at the same moment and forbade him, in accents that he had never yet been able to resist.

"Sit down, sir, this instant," said the old man, with terrible sternness. "Sit down, I say, or you will never be a partner of mine. Justice must take its course. What business and what right have we to protect a felon? I would not take *your* part if you were one. Indeed it is too late now, for the detectives will be with him before you could reach him. I gave Adams his address."

At this last piece of information Wardlaw junior leaned his head on the table, and groaned aloud, and a cold perspiration gathered in beads upon his white forehead.

CHAPTER II.

THAT same evening sat over their tea, in Norfolk Street, Strand, another couple, who were also father and son; but, in this pair, the Wardlaws were reversed. Michael Penfold was a reverend, gentle creature, with white hair, blue eyes, and great timidity; why, if a stranger put to him a question, he used to look all round the room before he ventured to answer.

Robert, his son, was a young man, with a large brown eye, a mellow voice, square shoulders, and a prompt and vigorous manner. Cricketer. Scholar. Parson.

They were talking hopefully together over a living Robert was going to buy; it was near Oxford, he said, and would not prevent his continuing to take pupils. "But, father," said he, "it will be a place to take my wife to if I ever have one; and, meantime, I hope you will run down now and then, Saturday to Monday."

"That I will, Robert. Ah! how proud *she* would have been to hear you preach; it was always her dream, poor thing."

"Let us think *she* can hear me," said Robert. "And I have got *you* still; the proceeds of this living will help me to lodge you more comfortably."

"You are very good Robert; I would rather see you spend it upon yourself; but, dear me, what a manager you must be to dress so beautifully as you do, and send your old father presents as you do, and yet put by fourteen hundred pounds to buy this living."

"You are mistaken, sir, I have only saved four

hundred; the odd thousand, — but that is a secret for the present."

"O, I am not inquisitive: I never was."

They then chatted about things of no importance whatever, and the old gentleman was just lighting his candle to go to bed, when a visitor was ushered into the room.

The Penfolds looked a little surprised, but not much. They had no street door all to themselves; no liveried dragons to interpose between them and unseasonable or unwelcome visitors.

The man was well dressed, with one exception; he wore a gold chain. He had a hooked nose, and a black, piercing eye. He stood at the door, and observed every person and thing in the room minutely, before he spoke a word.

Then he said, quietly, "Mr. Michael Penfold, I believe."

"At your service, sir."

"And Mr. Robert Penfold."

"I am Robert Penfold. What is your business?"

"Pray is the 'Robert Penfold' at the back of this note your writing?"

"Certainly it is; they would not cash it without that."

"O, you got the money, then?"

"Of course I did."

"You have not parted with it, have you?"

"No."

"All the better." He then turned to Michael, and looked at him earnestly a moment. "The fact is, sir," said he, "there is a little irregularity about this bill, which must be explained, or your son might be called on to refund the cash."

"Irregularity about — a bill?" cried Michael Penfold, in dismay. "Who is the drawer? Let me see it. O, dear me, something wrong about a bill indorsed by you, Robert?" and the old man began to shake piteously.

"Why, father," said Robert, "what are you afraid of? If the bill is irregular, I can but return the money. It is in the house."

"The best way will be for Mr. Robert Penfold to go at once with me to the bill-broker; he lives but a few doors off. And you, sir, must stay here, and be responsible for the funds, till we return."

Robert Penfold took his hat directly, and went off with this mysterious visitor.

They had not gone many steps, when Robert's companion stopped, and, getting in front of him, said, "We can settle this matter here." At the same time a policeman crossed the way, and joined them; and another man, who was in fact a policeman in plain clothes, emerged from a door-way, and stood at Robert Penfold's back.

The Detective, having thus surrounded him, threw off disguise. "My man," said he, "I ought to have done this job in your house. But I looked at the worthy old gentleman, and his gray hairs. I thought I'd spare him all I could. I have a warrant to arrest you for forgery!"

"Forgery! arrest me for forgery!" said Robert Penfold, with some amazement, but little emotion; for he hardly seemed to take it in, in all its horrible significance.

The next moment, however, he turned pale, and almost staggered under the blow.

"We had better go to Mr. Wardlaw," said he. "I entreat you to go to him with me."

"Can't be done," said the Detective. "Wardlaw has nothing to do with it. The bill is stopped. You are arrested by the gent that cashed it. Here

is the warrant; will you go quietly with us, or must I put the darbies on?"

Robert was violently agitated. "There is no need to arrest me," he cried; "I shall not run from my accuser. Hands off, I say. I'm a clergyman of the Church of England, and you shall not lay hands on me."

But one of the policemen did lay hands on him. Then the Reverend Robert Penfold shook him furiously off, and, with one active bound, sprang into the middle of the road.

The officers went at him incautiously, and the head-detective, as he rushed forward, received a heavy blow on the neck and jaw, that sounded along the street, and sent him rolling in the mud; this was followed by a quick succession of staggering facers, administered right and left, on the eyes and noses of the subordinates. These, however, though bruised and bleeding, succeeded at last in grappling their man, and all came to the ground together, and there struggled furiously; every window in the street was open by this time, and at one the white hair and reverend face of Michael Penfold looked out on this desperate and unseemly struggle, with hands that beat the air in helpless agony, and inarticulate cries of terror.

The Detective got up and sat upon Robert Penfold's chest; and at last the three forced the handcuffs upon him, and took him in a cab to the station-house.

Next day, before the magistrate, Wardlaw senior proved the note was a forgery, and Mr. Adams's partner swore to the prisoner as the person who had presented and indorsed the note. The officers attended, two with black eyes a-piece, and one with his jaw bound up, and two sound teeth in his pocket, which had been driven from their sockets by the prisoner in his desperate attempt to escape. Their evidence hurt the prisoner, and the magistrate refused bail.

The Reverend Robert Penfold was committed to prison, to be tried at the Central Criminal Court on a charge of felony.

Wardlaw senior returned home, and told Wardlaw junior, who said not a word. He soon received a letter from Robert Penfold, which agitated him greatly, and he promised to go to the prison and see him.

But he never went.

He was very miserable, a prey to an inward struggle. He dared not offend his father on the eve of being made partner. Yet his heart bled for Robert Penfold.

He did what might perhaps have been expected from that pale eye and receding chin,—he temporized. He said to himself, "Before that horrible trial comes on, I shall be the house of Wardlaw, and able to draw a check for thousands. I'll buy off Adams at any price, and hush up the whole matter."

So he hoped, and hoped. But the accountant was slow, the public prosecutor unusually quick, and, to young Wardlaw's agony, the partnership deed was not ready when an imploring letter was put into his hands, urging him, by all that men hold sacred, to attend at the court as the prisoner's witness.

This letter almost drove young Wardlaw mad. He went to Adams, and entreated him not to carry the matter into court. But Adams was inexorable. He had got his money, but would be revenged for the fright.

Baffled here, young Wardlaw went down to Oxford and shut himself up in his own room, a prey to fear and remorse. He sported his oak, and never went out. All his exercise was that of a wild beast in its den, walking restlessly up and down.

But all his caution did not prevent the prisoner's solicitor from getting to him. One morning, at seven o'clock, a clerk slipped in at the heels of his scout, and, coming to young Wardlaw's bedside, awoke him out of an uneasy slumber by serving him with a subpoena to appear as Robert Penfold's witness.

This last stroke finished him. His bodily health gave way under his mental distress. Gastric fever set in, and he was lying tossing and raving in delirium, while Robert Penfold was being tried at the Central Criminal Court.

The trial occupied six hours, and could easily be made rather interesting. But, for various reasons, with which it would not be good taste to trouble the reader, we decide to skim it.

The indictment contained two counts; one for forging the note of hand, the other for uttering it, knowing it to be forged.

On the first count, the Crown was weak, and had to encounter the evidence of Undercliff, the distinguished Expert, who swore that the hand which wrote "Robert Penfold" was not, in his opinion, the hand that had written the body of the instrument. He gave many minute reasons, in support of this; and nothing of any weight was advanced contra. The judge directed the jury to acquit the prisoner on that count.

But, on the charge of uttering, the evidence was clear, and on the question of knowledge, it was, perhaps, a disadvantage to the prisoner that he was tried in England, and could not be heard in person, as he could have been in a foreign court; above all, his resistance to the officers eked out the presumption that he knew the note had been forged by some person or other, who was probably his accomplice.

The absence of his witness, Wardlaw junior, was severely commented on by his counsel; indeed, he appealed to the judge to commit the said Wardlaw for contempt of court. But Wardlaw senior was recalled, and swore that he had left his son in a burning fever, not expected to live: and declared, with genuine emotion, that nothing but a high sense of public duty had brought him hither from his dying son's bedside. He also told the court that Arthur's inability to clear his friend had really been the first cause of his illness, from which he was not expected to recover.

The jury consulted together a long time; and, at last, brought in a verdict of "GUILTY"; but recommended him to mercy, on grounds which might fairly have been alleged in favor of his innocence; but, if guilty, rather aggravated his crime.

Then an officer of the court inquired, in a sort of chant or recitative, whether the prisoner had anything to say why judgment should not be given in accordance with the verdict.

It is easy to divest words of their meaning by false intonation; and prisoners in general receive this bit of singsong in dead silence. For why? the chant conveys no idea to their ears, and they would as soon think of replying to the notes of a cuckoo.

But the Reverend Robert Penfold was in a keen agony that sharpened all his senses; he caught the sense of the words in spite of the speaker, and clung

wildly to the straw that monotonous machine held out. "My Lord! my Lord!" he cried, "I'll tell you the real reason why young Wardlaw is not here."

The judge put up his hand with a gesture that enforced silence: "Prisoner," said he, "I cannot go back to facts; the jury have dealt with them. Judgment can be arrested only on grounds of law. On these you can be heard. But if you have none to offer, you must be silent, and submit to your sentence." He then, without a pause, proceeded to point out the heinous character of the offence, but admitted there was one mitigating circumstance; and, in conclusion, he condemned the culprit to five years penal servitude.

At this the poor wretch uttered a cry of anguish that was fearful, and clutched the dock convulsively.

Now a prisoner rarely speaks to a judge without revolting him by bad law, or bad logic, or hot words. But this wild cry was innocent of all these, and went straight from the heart in the dock to the heart on the judgment-seat. And so his lordship's voice trembled for a moment, and then became firm again, but solemn and humane. "But," said he, "my experience tells me this is your first crime, and may possibly be your last. I shall therefore use my influence that you may not be associated with more hardened criminals, but may be sent out of this country to another, where you may begin life afresh, and in the course of years, efface this dreadful stain. Give me hopes of you; begin your repentance where now you stand, by blaming yourself, and no other man. No man constrained you to utter a forged note, and to receive the money; it was found in your possession. For such an act there can be no defence in law, morality, or religion."

These words overpowered the culprit. He burst out crying with great violence.

But it did not last long. He became strangely composed all of a sudden; and said, "God forgive all concerned in this — but one — but one."

He then bowed respectfully, and like a gentleman, to the judge and the jury, and walked out of the dock with the air of a man who had parted with emotion, and would march to the gallows now without flinching.

The counsel for the Crown required that the forged document should be impounded.

"I was about to make the same demand," said the prisoner's counsel.

The judge snubbed them both, and said it was a matter of course.

Robert Penfold spent a year in separate confinement, and then, to cure him of its salutary effect (if any), was sent on board the hulk "Vengeance," and was herded with the greatest miscreants in creation. They did not reduce him to their level, but they injured his mind: and, before half his sentence had expired, he sailed for a penal colony, a man with a hot coal in his bosom, a creature embittered, poisoned; hoping little, believing little, fearing little, and hating much.

He took with him the prayer-book his mother had given him when he was ordained deacon. But he seldom read beyond the fly-leaf; there the poor lady had written at large her mother's heart, and her pious soul aspiring heavenwards for her darling son. This, when all seemed darkest, he would sometimes run to with moist eyes: for he was sure of his mother's love, but almost doubted the justice of his God.

CHAPTER III.

MR. WARDLAW went down to his son, and nursed him. He kept the newspapers from him, and on his fever abating, had him conveyed by easy stages to the seaside, and then sent him abroad.

The young man obeyed in gloomy silence. He never asked after Robert Penfold, now; never mentioned his name. He seemed, somehow, thankful to be controlled mind and body.

But, before he had been abroad a month, he wrote for leave to return home and to throw himself into business. There was, for once, a nervous impatience in his letters, and his father, who pitied him deeply, and was more than ever inclined to reward and indulge him, yielded readily enough; and, on his arrival, signed the partnership deed, and, Polonius-like, gave him much good counsel; then retired to his country seat.

At first he used to run up every three days, and examine the day-book and ledger, and advise his junior; but these visits soon became fewer, and at last he did little more than correspond occasionally.

Arthur Wardlaw held the reins, and easily paid his Oxford debts out of the assets of the firm. Not being happy in his mind he threw himself into commerce with feverish zeal, and very soon extended the operations of the house.

One of his first acts of authority was to send for Michael Penfold into his room. Now poor old Michael, ever since his son's misfortune, as he called it, had crept to his desk like a culprit, expecting every day to be discharged. When he received this summons he gave a sigh and went slowly to the young merchant.

Arthur Wardlaw looked up at his entrance, then looked down again, and said coldly, "Mr. Penfold, you have been a faithful servant to us many years; I raise your salary £50 a year, and you will keep the ledger."

The old man was dumbfounded at first, and then began to give vent to his surprise and gratitude; but Wardlaw cut him short, almost fiercely. "There, there, there," said he, without raising his eyes, "let me hear no more about it, and, above all, never speak to me of that cursed business. It was no fault of yours, nor mine neither. There — go — I want no thanks. Do you hear? leave me, Mr. Penfold, if you please."

The old man bowed low and retired, wondering much at his employer's goodness, and a little at his irritability.

Wardlaw junior's whole soul was given to business night and day, and he soon became known for a very ambitious and rising merchant. But, by and by, ambition had to encounter a rival in his heart. He fell in love; deeply in love; and with a worthy object.

The young lady was the daughter of a distinguished officer, whose merits were universally recognized, but not rewarded in proportion. Wardlaw's suit was favorably received by the father, and the daughter gradually yielded to an attachment, the warmth, sincerity, and singleness of which were manifest; and the pair would have been married, but for the circumstance that her father (partly through Wardlaw's influence by the by) had obtained a lucrative post abroad which it suited his means to accept, at all events for a time. He was a widower, and his daughter could not let him go alone.

This temporary separation, if it postponed a mar-

riage, led naturally to a solemn engagement; and Arthur Wardlaw enjoyed the happiness of writing and receiving affectionate letters by every foreign post. Love, worthily bestowed, shed its balm upon his heart, and, under its soft but powerful charm, he grew tranquil and complacent, and his character and temper seemed to improve. Such virtue is there in a pure attachment.

Meanwhile the extent of his operations alarmed old Penfold; but he soon reasoned that worthy down with overpowering conclusions and superior smiles.

He had been three years the ruling spirit of Wardlaw and Son, when some curious events took place in another hemisphere; and in these events, which we are now to relate, Arthur Wardlaw was more nearly interested than may appear at first sight.

Robert Penfold, in due course, applied to Lieutenant-General Rolleston for a ticket of leave. That functionary thought the application premature, the crime being so grave. He complained that the system had become too lax, and for his part he seldom gave a ticket of leave until some suitable occupation was provided for the applicant. "Will anybody take you as a clerk? If so, — I'll see about it."

Robert Penfold could find nobody to take him into a post of confidence all at once, and wrote the General an eloquent letter, begging hard to be allowed to labor with his hands.

Fortunately, General Rolleston's gardener had just turned him off; so he offered the post to his eloquent correspondent, remarking that he did not much mind employing a ticket of leave man himself, though he was resolved to protect his neighbors from their relapses.

The convict then came to General Rolleston, and begged leave to enter on his duties under the name of James Seaton. At that General Rolleston hem'd and haw'd, and took a note. But his final decision was as follows: "If you really mean to change your character, why the name you have disgraced might hang round your neck. Well, I'll give you every chance. But," said this old warrior, suddenly compressing his resolute lips just a little, "if you go a yard off the straight path *now*, look for no mercy, — Jemmy Seaton."

So the convict was re-christened at the tail of a threat, and let loose among the warrior's tulips.

His appearance was changed as effectually as his name. Even before he was Seatoned he had grown a silky mustache and beard of singular length and beauty; and what with these, and his working man's clothes, and his cheeks and neck tanned by the sun, our readers would never have recognized in this hale, bearded laborer the pale prisoner that had trembled, raged, wept, and submitted in the dock of the Central Criminal Court.

Our Universities cure men of doing things by halves, be the things mental or muscular; so Seaton gardened much more zealously than his plebeian predecessor: up at five, and did not leave till eight.

But he was unpopular in the kitchen, — because he was always out of it: taciturn and bitter, he shunned his fellow-servants.

Yet working among the flowers did him good; these his pretty companions and nurselings had no vices.

One day, as he was rolling the grass upon the lawn, he heard a soft rustle at some distance, and

looking round, saw a young lady on the gravel path, whose calm but bright face, coming so suddenly, literally dazzled him. She had a clear cheek blooming with exercise, rich, brown hair, smooth, glossy, and abundant, and a very light hazel eye, of singular beauty and serenity. She glided along, tranquil as a goddess, smote him with beauty and perfume, and left him staring after her receding figure, which was, in its way, as captivating as her face.

She was walking up and down for exercise, briskly, but without effort. Once she passed within a few yards of him, and he touched his hat to her. She inclined her head gently, but her eyes did not rest an instant on her gardener; and so she passed and repassed, unconsciously sawing this solitary heart with soft but penetrating thrills.

At last she went indoors to luncheon, and the lawn seemed to miss the light music of her rustling dress, and the sunshine of her presence, and there was a painful void; but that passed, and a certain sense of happiness stole over James Seaton, — an unreasonable joy, that often runs before folly and trouble.

The young lady was Helen Rolleston, just returned home from a visit. She walked in the garden every day, and Seaton watched her, and peeped at her, unseen, behind trees and bushes. He fed his eyes and his heart upon her, and, by degrees, she became the sun of his solitary existence. It was madness; but its first effect was not unwholesome. The daily study of this creature, who, though by no means the angel he took her for, was at all events a pure and virtuous woman, soothed his sore heart, and counteracted the demoralizing influences of his late companions. Every day he drank deeper of an insane, but purifying and elevating passion.

He avoided the kitchen still more; and that, by the by, was unlucky; for there he could have learned something about Miss Helen Rolleston, that would have warned him to keep at the other end of the garden, whenever that charming face and form glided to and fro amongst the minor flowers.

A beautiful face fires our imagination, and we see higher virtue and intelligence in it, than we can detect in its owner's head or heart when we descend to calm inspection. James Seaton gazed on Miss Rolleston day after day, at so respectful a distance, that she became his goddess. If a day passed without his seeing her, he was dejected. When she was behind her time, he was restless, anxious, and his work distasteful; and then, when she came out at last, he thrilled all over, and the lawn, ay, the world itself, seemed to fill with sunshine. His adoration, timid by its own nature, was doubly so by reason of his fallen and hopeless condition. He cut nosegays for her; but gave them to her maid Wilson for her. He had not the courage to offer them to herself.

One evening, as he went home, a man addressed him familiarly, but in a low voice. Seaton looked at him attentively, and recognized him at last. It was a convict called Butt, who had come over in the ship with him. The man offered him a glass of ale; Seaton declined it. Butt, a very clever rogue, seemed hurt: so then Seaton assented reluctantly. Butt took him to a public-house in a narrow street, and into a private room. Seaton started as soon as he entered, for there sat two repulsive ruffians, and, by a look that passed rapidly between them and Butt, he saw plainly they were waiting for him. He felt nervous; the place was so uncouth and dark, the faces so villainous.

However, they invited him to sit down, roughly, but with an air of good fellowship; and very soon opened their business over their ale. We are all bound to assist our fellow-creatures, when it can be done without trouble; and what they asked of him was a simple act of courtesy, such as in their opinion no man worthy of the name could deny to his fellow. It was to give General Rolleston's watch-dog a piece of prepared meat upon a certain evening: and in return for this trifling civility, they were generous enough to offer him a full share of any light valuables they might find in the General's house.

Seaton trembled, and put his face in his hands a moment. "I cannot do it," said he.

"Why not?"

"He has been too good to me."

A coarse laugh of derision greeted this argument; it seemed so irrelevant to these pure egoists. Seaton, however, persisted, and on that one of the men got up and stood before the door, and drew his knife gently.

Seaton glanced his eyes round in search of a weapon, and turned pale.

"Do you mean to split on us, mate?" said one of the ruffians in front of him.

"No, I don't. But I won't rob my benefactor: you shall kill me first." And with that he darted to the fireplace, and in a moment the poker was high in air, and the way he squared his shoulders and stood ready to hit to the on, or cut to the off, was a caution.

"Come, drop that," said Butt, grimly; "and put up your knife, Bob. Can't a pal be out of a job, and yet not split on them that is in it!"

"Why should I split?" said Robert Penfold. "Has the law been a friend to me? But I won't rob my benefactor — and his daughter."

"That is square enough," said Butt. "Why, pals, there are other cribs to be cracked besides that old bloke's. Finish the ale, mate, and part friends."

"If you will promise me to 'crack some other crib,' and let that one alone."

A sullen assent was given, and Seaton drank their healths, and walked away. Butt followed him soon after, and affected to side with him, and intimated that he himself was capable of not robbing a man's house who had been good to him, or to a pal of his. Indeed this plausible person said so much, and his sullen comrades had said so little, that Seaton, rendered keen and anxious by love, invested his savings in a Colt's revolver and ammunition.

He did not stop there; after the hint about the watch-dog, he would not trust that faithful but too carnivorous animal; he brought his blankets into the little tool-house, and lay there every night in a sort of dog's sleep. This tool-house was erected in a little back garden, separated from the lawn only by some young trees in single file. Now Miss Rolleston's window looked out upon the lawn, so that Seaton's watchtower was not many yards from it; then, as the tool-house was only lighted from above he bored a hole in the wooden structure, and through this he watched, and slept, and watched. He used to sit studying theology by a farthing rushlight till the lady's bedtime, and then he watched for her shadow. If it appeared for a few moments on the blind, he gave a sigh of content, and went to sleep, but awaked every now and then to see that all was well.

After a few nights, his alarms naturally ceased, but his love increased, fed now from this new source,

the sweet sense of being the secret protector of her he adored.

Meantime, Miss Rolleston's lady's maid, Wilson, fell in love with him after her fashion; she had taken a fancy to his face at once, and he had encouraged her a little, unintentionally; for he brought the nosegays to her, and listened complacently to her gossip, for the sake of the few words she let fall now and then about her young mistress. As he never exchanged two sentences at a time with any other servant, this flattered Sarah Wilson, and she soon began to meet and accost him oftener, and in cherrier-colored ribbons, than he could stand. So then he showed impatience, and then she, reading him by herself, suspected some vulgar rival.

Suspicion soon bred jealousy, jealousy vigilance, and vigilance, detection.

Her first discovery was, that, so long as she talked of Miss Helen Rolleston, she was always welcome; her second was, that Seaton slept in the tool-house.

She was not romantic enough to connect her two discoveries together. They lay apart in her mind, until circumstances we are about to relate supplied a connecting link.

One Thursday evening James Seaton's goddess sat alone with her papa, and — being a young lady of fair abilities, who had gone through her course of music and other studies, taught brainlessly, and who was now going through a course of monotonous pleasures, and had not accumulated any great store of mental resources — she was listless and languid, and would have yawned forty times in her papa's face, only she was too well-bred. She always turned her head away when it came, and either suppressed it, or else hid it with a lovely white hand. At last, as she was a good girl, she blushed at her behavior, and roused herself up, and said she, "Papa, shall I play you the new quadrilles?"

Papa gave a start and a shake, and said, with well-feigned vehemence, "Ay, do, my dear," and so composed himself — to listen; and Helen sat down and played the quadrilles.

The composer had taken immortal melodies, some gay, some sad, and had robbed them of their distinctive character, and hashed them till they were all one monotonous rattle. But General Rolleston was little the worse for all this. As Apollo saved Horace from hearing a poetaster's rhymes, so did Somnus, another beneficent little deity, rescue our warrior from his daughter's music.

She was neither angry nor surprised. A delicious smile illumined her face directly; she crept to him on tiptoe, and bestowed a kiss, light as a zephyr, on his gray head. And, in truth, the bending attitude of this supple figure, clad in snowy muslin, the virginal face and light hazel eye beaming love and reverence, and the airy kiss, had something angelic.

She took her candle, and glided up to her bedroom. And, the moment she got there, and could gratify her somnolence without offence, need we say she became wide-awake? She sat down, and wrote long letters to three other young ladies, gushing affection, asking questions of the kind nobody replies to, painting, with a young lady's colors, the male being to whom she was shortly to be married, wishing her dear friends a like demigod, if perchance earth contained two; and so to the last new bonnet and preacher.

She sat over her paper till one o'clock, and Seaton watched and adored her shadow.

When she had done writing, she opened her window and looked out upon the night. She lifted those wonderful hazel eyes towards the stars, and her watcher might well be pardoned if he saw in her a celestial being looking up from an earthly resting-place towards her native sky.

At two o'clock she was in bed, but not asleep. She lay calmly gazing at the Southern Cross, and other lovely stars shining with vivid, but chaste, fire in the purple vault of heaven.

While thus employed she heard a slight sound outside that made her turn her eyes towards a young tree near her window. Its top branches were waving a good deal, though there was not a breath stirring. This struck her as curious, very curious.

Whilst she wondered, suddenly an arm and a hand came in sight, and after them the whole figure of a man, going up the tree.

Helen sat up now, glaring with terror, and was so paralyzed she did not utter a sound. About a foot below her window was a lead flat that roofed the bay window below. It covered an area of several feet, and the man sprang on to it with perfect ease from the tree. Helen shrieked with terror. At that very instant there was a flash, a pistol-shot, and the man's arms went whirling, and he staggered and fell over the edge of the flat, and struck the grass below with a heavy thud. Shots and blows followed, and all the sounds of a bloody struggle rung in Helen's ears as she flung herself screaming from the bed and darted to the door. She ran and clung quivering to her sleepy maid, Wilson. The house was alarmed, lights flashed, footsteps pattered, there was universal commotion.

General Rolleston soon learned his daughter's story from Wilson, and aroused his male servants, one of whom was an old soldier. They searched the house first; but no entrance had been effected; so they went out on the lawn with blunderbuss and pistol.

They found a man lying on his back at the foot of the bay window.

They pounced on him, and, to their amazement, it was the gardener, James Seaton. Insensible.

General Rolleston was quite taken aback for a moment. Then he was sorry. But after a little reflection, he said very sternly, "Carry the black-guard in-doors; and run for an officer."

Seaton was taken into the hall, and laid flat on the floor.

All the servants gathered about him, brimful of curiosity, and the female ones began to speak altogether; but General Rolleston told them sharply to hold their tongues, and to retire behind the man. "Somebody sprinkle him with cold water," said he; "and be quiet, all of you, and keep out of sight, while I examine him." He stood before the insensible figure with his arms folded, amidst a dead silence, broken only by the stifled sobs of Sarah Wilson, and of a sociable housemaid who cried with her for company.

And now Seaton began to writhe and show signs of returning sense.

Next he moaned piteously, and sighed. But General Rolleston could not pity him; he waited grimly for returning consciousness, to subject him to a merciless interrogatory.

He waited just one second too long. He had to answer a question instead of putting one.

The judgment is the last faculty a man recovers when emerging from insensibility; and Seaton,

seeing the General standing before him, stretched out his hands, and said, in a faint but earnest voice, before eleven witnesses, "Is she safe? O, is she safe?"

CHAPTER IV.

SARAH WILSON left off crying, and looked down on the ground with a very red face. General Rolleston was amazed. "Is she safe?" Is who safe?" said he. "He means my mistress," replied Wilson, rather brusquely; and flounced out of the hall.

"She is safe, no thanks to you," said General Rolleston. "What were you doing under her window at this time of night?" And the harsh tone in which this question was put showed Seaton he was suspected. This wounded him, and he replied, doggedly, "Lucky for you all I was there."

"That is no answer to my question," said the General, sternly.

"It is all the answer I shall give you."

"Then I shall hand you over to the officer, without another word."

"Do, sir, do," said Seaton, bitterly; but he added more gently, "you will be sorry for it when you come to your senses."

At this moment Wilson entered with a message. "If you please, sir, Miss Rolleston says the robber had no beard. Miss have never noticed Seaton's face, but his beard she have; and O! if you please, sir, she begged me to ask him,—Was it you that fired the pistol and shot the robber?"

The delivery of this ungrammatical message but rational query, was like a ray of light streaming into a dark place: it changed the whole aspect of things. As for Seaton, he received it as if Heaven was speaking to him through Wilson. His sullen air relaxed, the water stood in his eyes, he smiled affectionately, and said in a low, tender voice, "Tell her I heard some bad characters talking about this house,—that was a month ago,—so, ever since then, I have slept in the tool-house to watch. Yes, I shot the robber with my revolver, and I marked one or two more; but they were three to one; I think I must have got a blow on the head; for I felt nothing—"

Here he was interrupted by a violent scream from Wilson. She pointed downwards, with her eyes glaring; and a little blood was seen to be trickling slowly over Seaton's stocking and shoe.

"Wounded," said the General's servant, Tom, in the business-like accent of one who had seen a thousand wounds.

"O! never mind that," said Seaton. "It can't be very deep, for I don't feel it"; then, fixing his eyes on General Rolleston, he said, in a voice that broke down suddenly, "there stands the only man who has wounded me to-night, to hurt me."

The way General Rolleston received this point-blank reproach surprised some persons present, who had observed only the imperious and iron side of his character. He hung his head in silence a moment; then, being discontented with himself, he went into a passion with his servants for standing idle. "Run away, you women," said he, roughly. "Now, Tom, if you are good for anything, strip the man and stanch his wound. Andrew, a bottle of port, quick!"

Then, leaving him for a while in friendly hands, he went to his daughter, and asked her if she saw any

objection to a bed being made up in the house for the wounded convict.

"O papa," said she, "why of course not. I am all gratitude. What is he like, Wilson? for it is a most provoking thing, I never noticed his face, only his beautiful beard glittering in the sunshine ever so far off. Poor young man! O yes, papa! send him to bed directly, and we will all nurse him. I never did any good in the world yet, and so why not begin at once?"

General Rolleston laughed at this squirt of enthusiasm from his staid daughter, and went off to give the requisite orders.

But Wilson followed him immediately and stopped him in the passage. "If you please, sir, I think you had better not. I have something to tell you." She then communicated to him by degrees her suspicion that James Seaton was in love with his daughter. He treated this with due ridicule at first; but she gave him one reason after another till she staggered him, and he went down stairs in a most mixed and puzzled frame of mind, inclined to laugh, inclined to be angry, inclined to be sorry.

The officer had just arrived, and was looking over some photographs to see if James Seaton was "one of his birds." Such, alas! was his expression.

At sight of this Rolleston colored up; but extricated himself from the double difficulty with some skill. "Hexam," said he, "this poor fellow has behaved like a man, and got himself wounded in my service. You are to take him to the infirmary; but mind, they must treat him like my own son, and nothing he asks for be denied him."

Seaton walked with feeble steps, and leaning on two men, to the infirmary; and General Rolleston ordered a cup of coffee, lighted a cigar, and sat cogitating over this strange business, and asking himself how he could get rid of this young madman, and yet befriend him. As for Sarah Wilson, she went to bed discontented, and wondering at her own bad judgment. She saw, too late, that, if she had held her tongue, Seaton would have been her patient and her prisoner; and as for Miss Rolleston, when it came to the point, why she would never have nursed him except by proxy, and the proxy would have been Sarah Wilson.

However, the blunder blind passion had led her into was partially repaired by Miss Rolleston herself. When she heard, next day, where Seaton was gone, she lifted up her hands in amazement. "What could papa be thinking of to send our benefactor to a hospital?" And, after meditating a while, she directed Wilson to cut a nosegay and carry it to Seaton. "He is a gardener," said she, innocently. "Of course he will miss his flowers sadly in that miserable place."

And she gave the same order every day with a constancy, that, you must know, formed part of this young lady's character. Soup, wine, and jellies were sent from the kitchen every other day with equal pertinacity.

Wilson concealed the true donor of all those things, and took the credit to herself. By this means she obtained the patient's gratitude, and he showed it so frankly, she hoped to steal his love as well.

But no! his fancy and his heart remained true to the cold beauty he had served so well, and she had forgotten him apparently.

This irritated Wilson at last, and she set to work to cure him with wholesome, but bitter medicine. She sat down beside him one day, and said, cheer-

fully, "We are all 'on the keyfoot' just now. Miss Rolleston's beau is come on a visit."

The patient opened his eyes with astonishment.

"Miss Rolleston's beau?"

"Ay, her intended. What, did n't you know, she is engaged to be married?"

"She engaged to be married?" gasped Seaton.

Wilson watched him with a remorseless eye.

"Why, James," said she, after a while, "did you think the likes of her would go through the world without a mate?"

Seaton made no reply but a moan, and lay back like one dead, utterly crushed by this cruel blow.

A buxom middle-aged nurse now came up, and said, with a touch of severity, "Come, my good girl, no doubt you mean well, but you are doing ill. You had better leave him to us for the present."

On this hint Wilson bounced out, and left the patient to his misery.

At her next visit she laid a nosegay on his bed, and gossiped away, talking of everything in the world, except Miss Rolleston.

At last she came to a pause, and Seaton laid his hand on her arm directly, and looking piteously in her face spoke his first word.

"Does she love him?"

"What, still harping on her?" said Wilson. "Well, she does n't hate him, I suppose, or she would not marry him."

"For pity's sake don't trifle with me! Does she love him?"

"La, James, how can I tell? She may n't love him quite as much as I could love a man that took my fancy" (here she cast a languishing glance on Seaton); "but I see no difference between her and other young ladies. Miss is very fond of her papa, for one thing; and he favors the match. Ay, and she likes her partner well enough: she is brighter like, now he is in the house, and she reads all her friends' letters to him ever so lovingly; and I do notice she leans on him, out walking, a trifle more than there is any need for."

At this picture James Seaton writhed in his bed like some agonized creature under vivisection; but the woman, spurred by jealousy, and also by egotistical passion, had no mercy left for him.

"And why not?" continued she; "he is young, and handsome, and rich, and he dotes on her. If you are really her friend, you ought to be glad she is so well suited."

At this admonition the tears stood in Seaton's eyes, and after a while, he got strength to say, "I know I ought, I know it. If he is only worthy of her, as worthy as any man could be."

"That he is, James. Why, I'll be bound you have heard of him. It is young Mr. Wardlaw."

Seaton started up in bed. "Who? Wardlaw? what Wardlaw?"

"What Wardlaw? why, the great London merchant, his son. Leastways he manages the whole concern now, I hear; the old gentleman, he is retired, by all accounts."

"CURSE HIM! CURSE HIM! CURSE HIM!" yelled James Seaton, with his eyes glaring fearfully, and both hands beating the air.

Sarah Wilson recoiled with alarm.

"That angel marry him!" shrieked Seaton. "Never, while I live: I'll throttle him with these hands first."

What more his ungovernable fury would have uttered was interrupted by a rush of nurses and at-

tendants, and Wilson was bundled out of the place with little ceremony.

He contrived however to hurl a word after her, accompanied with a look of concentrated rage and resolution.

"NEVER, I TELL YOU, — WHILE I LIVE."

At her next visit to the hospital, Wilson was refused admission by order of the Head Surgeon. She left her flowers daily all the same.

After a few days she thought the matter might have cooled, and, having a piece of news to communicate to Seaton, with respect to Arthur Wardlaw, she asked to see that patient.

"Left the hospital this morning," was the reply.

"What, cured?"

"Why not? We have cured worse cases than his."

"Where has he gone to? Pray tell me."

"O, certainly." And inquiry was made. But the reply was, "Left no address."

Sarah Wilson, like many other women of high and low degree, had swift misgivings of mischief to come. She was taken with a fit of trembling, and had to sit down in the hall.

And, to tell the truth, she had cause to tremble; for that tongue of hers had launched two wild beasts, — Jealousy and Revenge.

When she got better she went home, and, coward-like, said not a word to living soul.

That day, Arthur Wardlaw dined with General Rolleston and Helen. They were to be alone for a certain reason; and he came half an hour before dinner. Helen thought he would, and was ready for him on the lawn.

They walked arm-in-arm, talking of the happiness before them, and regretting a temporary separation that was to intervene. He was her father's choice, and she loved her father devotedly; he was her male property; and young ladies like that sort of property, especially when they see nothing to dislike in it. He loved her passionately, and that was her due, and pleased her and drew a gentle affection, if not a passion, from her in return. Yes, that lovely forehead did come very near young Wardlaw's shoulder more than once or twice, as they strolled slowly up and down on the soft mossy turf.

And, on the other side of the hedge that bounded the lawn, a man lay crouched in the ditch, and saw it all with gleaming eyes.

Just before the affianced ones went in, Helen said, "I have a little favor to ask you, dear. The poor man, Seaton, who fought the robbers, and was wounded, — papa says he is a man of education, and wanted to be a clerk or something. *Could* you find him a place?"

"I think I can," said Wardlaw; "indeed, I am sure. A line to White and Co. will do it; they want a shipping clerk."

"O, how good you are!" said Helen; and lifted her face all beaming with thanks.

The opportunity was tempting; the lover fond: two faces met for a single moment, and one of the two burned for five minutes after.

The basilisk eyes saw the soft collision; but the owner of those eyes did not hear the words that earned him that torture. He lay still and bided his time.

General Rolleston's house stood clear of the town at the end of a short, but narrow and tortuous lane.

This situation had tempted the burglars whom Seaton baffled; and now it tempted Seaton.

Wardlaw must pass that way on leaving General Rolleston's house.

At a bend of the lane two twin elms stood out a foot or two from the hedge. Seaton got behind these at about ten o'clock, and watched for him with a patience and immobility that boded ill.

His preparations for this encounter were singular. He had a close-shutting inkstand and a pen, and one sheet of paper, at the top of which he had written "Sydney," and the day of the month and year, leaving the rest blank. And he had the revolver with which he had shot the robber at Helen Rolleston's window; and a barrel of that arm was loaded with swan shot.

CHAPTER V.

THE moon went down; the stars shone out clear.

Eleven o'clock boomed from a church clock in the town.

Wardlaw did not come, and Seaton did not move from his ambush.

Twelve o'clock boomed, and Wardlaw never came, and Seaton never moved.

Soon after midnight, General Rolleston's hall-door opened, and a figure appeared in a flood of light. Seaton's eyes gleamed at the light, for it was young Wardlaw, with a footman at his back holding a lighted lamp.

Wardlaw, however, seemed in no hurry to leave the house, and the reason soon appeared; he was joined by Helen Rolleston, and she was equipped for walking. The watcher saw her serene face shine in the light. The General himself came next; and, as they left the door, out came Tom with a blunderbuss, and brought up the rear. Seaton drew behind the trees, and postponed, but did not resign, his purpose.

Steps and murmurings came, and passed him, and receded.

The only words he caught distinctly came from Wardlaw, as he passed. "It is nearly high tide. I fear we must make haste."

Seaton followed the whole party at a short distance, feeling sure they would eventually separate and give him his opportunity with Wardlaw.

They went down to the harbor and took a boat; Seaton came nearer, and learned they were going on board the great steamer bound for England, that loomed so black, with monstrous eyes of fire.

They put off, and Seaton stood baffled.

Presently the black monster, with enormous eyes of fire, spouted her steam like a Leviathan, and then was still; next the smoke puffed, the heavy paddles revolved, and she rushed out of the harbor; and Seaton sat down upon the ground, and all seemed ended. Helen gone to England! Wardlaw gone with her! Love and revenge had alike eluded him. He looked up at the sky, and played with the pebbles at his feet, stupidly, stupidly. He wondered why he was born; why he consented to live a single minute after this. His angel and his demon gone home together! And he left here!

He wrote a few lines on the paper he had intended for Wardlaw, sprinkled them with sand, and put them in his bosom, then stretched himself out with a weary moan, like a dying dog, to wait the flow of the tide, and, with it, Death. Whether or not his

resolution or his madness could have carried him so far cannot be known, for even as the water rippled in and, trickling under his back, chilled him to the bone, a silvery sound struck his ear. He started to his feet, and life and its joys rushed back upon him. It was the voice of the woman he loved so madly.

Helen Rolleston was on the water, coming ashore again in the little boat.

He crawled, like a lizard, among the boats ashore to catch a sight of her: he did see her, was near her, unseen himself. She landed with her father. So Wardlaw was gone to England without her. Seaton trembled with joy. Presently his goddess began to lament in the prettiest way. "Papa! Papa!" she sighed, "Why must friends part in this sad world? Poor Arthur is gone from me; and, by and by, I shall go from you, my own papa." And at that prospect she wept gently.

"Why, you foolish child!" said the old General, tenderly, "what matters a little parting, when we are all to meet again, in dear old England. Well then, there, have a cry; it will do you good." He patted her head tenderly, as she clung to his warlike breast; and she took him at his word; the tears ran swiftly and glistened in the very starlight.

But, O! how Seaton's heart yearned at all this.

What? must n't he say a word to comfort her; he who, at that moment, would have thought no more of dying to serve her, or to please her, than he would of throwing one of those pebbles into that slimy water.

Well, her pure tears somehow cooled his hot brain, and washed his soul, and left him wondering at himself and his misdeeds this night. His guardian angel seemed to go by and wave her dewy wings, and fan his hot passions as she passed.

He kneeled down and thanked God he had not met Arthur Wardlaw in that dark lane.

Then he went home to his humble lodgings, and there buried himself; and from that day seldom went out, except to seek employment. He soon obtained it as a copyist.

Meantime the police were on his track, employed by a person with a gentle disposition, but a tenacity of purpose truly remarkable.

Great was Seaton's uneasiness when one day he saw Hexham at the foot of his stair; greater still, when the officer's quick eye caught sight of him, and his light foot ascended the stairs directly. He felt sure Hexham had heard of his lurking about General Rolleston's premises. However, he prepared to defend himself to the uttermost.

Hexham came into his room without ceremony, and looking mighty grim. "Well, my lad, so we have got you, after all."

"What is my crime now?" asked Seaton, sullenly.

"James," said the officer, very solemnly, "it is an unheard-of crime this time. You have been—running—away—from a pretty girl. Now that is a mistake at all times; but, when she is as beautiful as an angel, and rich enough to slip a fiver into Dick Hexham's hands, and lay him on your track, what is the use? Letter for you, my man."

Seaton took the letter, with a puzzled air. It was written in a clear but feminine hand, and slightly scented.

The writer, in a few polished lines, excused herself for taking extraordinary means to find Mr. Seaton; but hoped he would consider that he had laid her under a deep obligation, and that gratitude *will* sometimes be importunate. She had the pleasure to inform him that the office of shipping clerk,

at Messrs. White and Co.'s was at his service, and she hoped he would take it without an hour's further delay, for that she was assured that many persons had risen to wealth and consideration in the colony from such situations.

Then, as this wary but courteous young lady had no wish to enter into a correspondence with her ex-gardener, she added,—

"Mr. Seaton need not trouble himself to reply to this note. A simple 'yes' to Mr. Hexham will be enough, and will give sincere pleasure to Mr. Seaton's

"Obedient servant and well-wisher,
"HELEN ANNE ROLLESTON."

Seaton bowed his head over this letter in silent but deep emotion.

Hexam respected that emotion, and watched him with a sort of vague sympathy.

Seaton lifted his head, and the tears stood thick in his eyes. Said he, in a voice of exquisite softness, scarce above a whisper, "Tell her, 'yes' and 'God bless her.' Good by. I want to go on my knees, and pray God to bless her, as she deserves. Good by."

Hexam took the hint, and retired softly.

CHAPTER VI.

WHITE AND Co. stumbled on a treasure in James Seaton. Your colonial clerk is not so narrow and apathetic as your London clerk, whose two objects seem to be, to learn one department only, and not to do too much in that; but Seaton, a gentleman and a scholar, eclipsed even colonial clerks in this, that he omitted no opportunity of learning the whole business of White and Co., and was also animated by a feverish zeal, that now and then provoked laughter from clerks, but was agreeable, as well as surprising, to White and Co. Of that zeal, his incurable passion was partly the cause. Fortunes had been made with great rapidity in Sydney; and Seaton now conceived a wild hope of acquiring one, by some lucky hit, before Wardlaw could return to Helen Rolleston. And yet his common-sense said, if I was as rich as Croesus, how could she ever mate with me, a stained man. And yet his burning heart said, don't listen to reason; listen only to me. Try.

And so he worked double tides; and, in virtue of his University education, had no snobbish notions about never putting his hand to manual labor: he would lay down his pen at any moment, and bear a hand to lift a chest, or roll a cask. Old White saw him thus multiply himself, and was so pleased that he raised his salary one third.

He never saw Helen Rolleston, except on Sunday. On that day he went to her church, and sat half behind a pillar, and feasted his eyes and his heart upon her. He lived sparingly, saved money, bought a strip of land, by payment of £10 deposit, and sold it in forty hours for £100 profit, and watched keenly for similar opportunities on a larger scale; and all for her. Struggling with a mountain: hoping against reason, and the world.

White and Co. were employed to ship a valuable cargo on board two vessels chartered by Wardlaw and Son; the Shannon and Prosperpine.

Both these ships lay in Sydney harbor, and had taken in the bulk of their cargoes: but the supple-

ment was the cream; for Wardlaw, in person, had warehoused eighteen cases of gold dust and ingots, and fifty of lead and smelted copper. They were all examined, and branded, by Mr. White, who had duplicate keys of the gold cases. But the contents as a matter of habit and prudence were not described outside; but were marked Proserpine and Shannon, respectively; the mate of the Proserpine, who was in Wardlaw's confidence, had written instructions to look carefully to the stowage of all these cases, and was in and out of the store one afternoon just before closing, and measured the cubic contents of the cases, with a view to stowage in the respective vessels. The last time he came he seemed rather the worse for liquor; and Seaton, who accompanied him, having stepped out for a minute for something or other, was rather surprised on his return to find the door closed, and it struck him Mr. Wylie (that was the mate's name) might be inside; the more so as the door closed very easily with a spring bolt, but it could only be opened by a key of peculiar construction. Seaton took out his key, opened the door, and called to the mate: but received no reply. However, he took the precaution to go round the store, and see whether Wylie, rendered somnolent by liquor, might not be lying oblivious among the cases; Wylie, however, was not to be seen, and Seaton finding himself alone did an unwise thing; he came and contemplated Wardlaw's cases of metal and specie. (Men will go too near the thing that causes their pain.) He eyed them with grief and with desire, and could not restrain a sigh at these material proofs of his rival's wealth: the wealth that probably had smoothed his way to General Rolleston's home, and to his daughter's heart; for wealth can pave the way to hearts, ay, even to hearts that cannot be downright bought. This reverie, no doubt, lasted longer than he thought, for presently he heard the loud rattle of shutters going up below: it was closing time; he hastily closed and locked the iron shutters, and then went out and shut the door.

He had been gone about two hours, and that part of the street, so noisy in business hours, was hushed in silence, all but an occasional footstep on the flags outside, when something mysterious occurred in the warehouse, now as dark as pitch.

At an angle of the wall stood two large cases in a vertical position, with smaller cases lying at their feet: these two cases were about eight feet high, more or less. Well, behind these cases suddenly flashed a feeble light, and the next moment two brown and sinewy hands appeared on the edge of one of the cases,—the edge next the wall; the case vibrated and rocked a little, and the next moment there mounted on the top of it not a cat, nor a monkey, as might have been expected, but an animal that in truth resembles both these quadrupeds, viz. a sailor; and need we say that sailor was the mate of the Proserpine. He descended lightly from the top of the case behind which he had been jammed for hours, and lighted a dark lantern; and went softly groping about the store with it.

This was a mysterious act, and would perhaps have puzzled the proprietors of the store even more than it would a stranger: for a stranger would have said at once this is burglary, or else arson: but those acquainted with the place would have known that neither of those crimes was very practicable. This enterprising sailor could not burn down this particular store without roast-

ing himself the first thing; and indeed he could not burn it down at all; for the roof was flat, and was in fact one gigantic iron tank, like the roof of Mr. Goding's brewery in London: and, by a neat contrivance of American origin, the whole tank could be turned in one moment to a shower bath, and drown a conflagration in thirty seconds or thereabouts. Nor could he rifle the place; the goods were greatly protected by their weight, and it was impossible to get out of the store without raising an alarm, and being searched.

But, not to fall into the error of writers who underrate their readers' curiosity and intelligence, and so deluge them with comments and explanations, we will now simply relate what Wylie did, leaving you to glean his motives as this tale advances. His jacket had large pockets, and he took out of them a bunch of eighteen bright steel keys, numbered, a set of new screw-drivers, a flask of rum, and two ship biscuits.

He unlocked the eighteen cases marked Proserpine, &c., and, peering in with his lantern, saw the gold dust and small ingots packed in parcels, and surrounded by Australian wool of the highest possible quality. It was a luscious sight.

He then proceeded to a heavier task; he unscrewed, one after another, eighteen of the cases marked Shannon, and the eighteen so selected, perhaps by private marks, proved to be packed close, and on a different system from the gold, viz. in pigs, or square blocks, three, or in some cases four, to each chest. Now, these two ways of packing the specie and the baser metal respectively, had the effect of producing a certain uniformity of weight in the thirty-six cases Wylie was inspecting: otherwise the gold cases would have been twice the weight of those that contained the baser metal; for lead is proverbially heavy, but under scientific tests is to gold as five to twelve, or thereabouts.

In his secret and mysterious labor Wylie was often interrupted. Whenever he heard a step on the pavement outside, he drew the slide of his lantern and hid the light. If he had examined the iron shutters, he would have seen that his light could never pierce through them into the street. But he was not aware of this. Notwithstanding these occasional interruptions, he worked so hard and continuously, that the perspiration poured down him ere he had unscrewed those eighteen chests containing the pigs of lead. However, it was done at last, and then he refreshed himself with a draught from his flask. The next thing was, he took the three pigs of lead out of one of the cases marked Shannon, &c., and numbered fifteen, and laid them very gently on the floor. Then he transferred to that empty case the mixed contents of a case branded Proserpine 1, &c., and then he did with the utmost care and nicety, lest gold dust spilled should tell tales. And so he went on and amused himself by shifting the contents of the whole eighteen cases marked Proserpine, &c., into eighteen cases marked Shannon, &c., and refilling them with the Shannon's lead. Frolicsome Mr. Wylie! Then he sat down on one of the cases Prosperined, and ate a biscuit and drank a little rum; not much: for at this part of his career he was a very sober man, though he could feign drunkenness, or indeed anything else.

The gold was all at his mercy, yet he did not pocket an ounce of it; not even a pennyweight to make a wedding-ring for Nancy Rouse. Mr. Wylie had a conscience. And a very original one

it was; and, above all, he was very true to those he worked with. He carefully locked the gold cases up again, and resumed the screw-driver, for there was another heavy stroke of work to be done; and he went at it like a man. He carefully screwed down again, one after another, all those eighteen cases marked Shannon, which he had filled with gold dust, and then, heating a sailor's needle red-hot over his burning wick, he put his own secret marks on those eighteen cases,—marks that no eye but his own could detect. By this time, though a very powerful man, he felt much exhausted, and would gladly have snatched an hour's repose. But, consulting his watch by the light of his lantern, he found the sun had just risen. He retired to his place of concealment in the same cat-like way he had come out of it,—that is to say, he mounted on the high cases, and then slipped down behind them, into the angle of the wall.

As soon as the office opened, two sailors, whom he had carefully instructed overnight, came with a boat for the cases; the warehouse was opened in consequence, but they were informed that Wylie must be present at the delivery.

"O, he won't be long," said they; "told us he would meet us here."

There was a considerable delay, and a good deal of talking, and presently Wylie was at their backs, and put in his word.

Seaton was greatly surprised at finding him there, and asked him where he had sprung from.

"Me!" said Wylie, jocosely, "why, I hailed from Davy Jones's locker last."

"I never heard you come in," said Seaton, thoughtfully.

"Well, sir," replied Wylie, civilly, "a man does learn to go like a cat on board ship, that is the truth. I came in at the door like my betters; but I thought I heard you mention my name, so I made no noise. Well, here I am, any way, and,—Jack, how many trips can we take these thundering chests in? Let us see, eighteen for the Proserpine, and forty for the Shannon. Is that correct, sir?"

"Perfectly."

"Then, if you will deliver them, I'll check the delivery aboard the lighter there; and then we'll tow her alongside the ships."

Seaton called up two more clerks, and sent one to the boat, and one on board the barge. The barge was within hail; so the cases were checked as they passed out of the store, and checked again at the small boat, and also on board the lighter. When they were all cleared out, Wylie gave Seaton his receipt for them, and, having a steam-tug in attendance, towed the lighter alongside the Shannon first.

Seaton carried the receipt to his employer.

"But, sir," said he, "is this regular for an officer of the Proserpine to take the Shannon's cargo from us?"

"No, it is not regular," said the old gentleman; and he looked through a window, and summoned Mr. Hardcastle.

Hardcastle explained that the Proserpine shipped the gold, which was the more valuable consignment; and that he saw no harm in the officer, who was so highly trusted by the merchant (on this and on former occasions), taking out a few tons of lead and copper to the Shannon.

"Well, sir," said Seaton, "suppose I was to go out and see the chests stowed in those vessels?"

"I think you are making a fuss about nothing," said Hardcastle.

Mr. White was of the same opinion, but, being too wise to check zeal and caution, told Seaton he might go for his own satisfaction.

Seaton, with some difficulty, got a little boat and pulled across the harbor. He found the Shannon had shipped all the chests marked with her name; and the captain and mate of the Proserpine were beginning to ship theirs. He paddled under the Proserpine's stern.

Captain Hudson, a rough salt, sang out, and asked him roughly what he wanted there.

"O, it is all right," said the mate; "he is come for your receipt and Hewitt's. Be smart now, men; two on board, sixteen to come."

Seaton saw the chests marked Proserpine stowed in the Proserpine, and went ashore with Captain Hewitt's receipt of forty cases on board the Shannon, and Captain Hudson's of eighteen on board the Proserpine.

As he landed he met Lloyd's agent, and told him what a valuable freight he had just shipped. That gentleman merely remarked that both ships were underwritten in Sydney by the owners; but the freight was insured in London, no doubt.

There was still something about this business Seaton did not quite like; perhaps it was in the haste of the shipments, or in the manner of the mate. At all events, it was too slight and subtle to be communicated to others with any hope of convincing them; and, moreover, Seaton could not but own to himself that he hated Wardlaw, and was, perhaps, no fair judge of his acts, and even of the acts of his servants.

And soon a blow fell that drove the matter out of his head and his heart. Miss Helen Rolleston called at the office, and, standing within a few feet of him, handed Hardcastle a letter from Arthur Wardlaw, directing that the ladies' cabin on board the Shannon should be placed at her disposal.

Hardcastle bowed low to Beauty and Station, and promised her the best possible accommodation on board the Shannon, bound for England next week.

As she retired, she cast one quiet glance round the office in search of Seaton's beard. But he had reduced its admired luxuriance, and trimmed it to a narrow mercantile point. She did not know his other features from Adam, and little thought that young man, bent double over his paper, was her preserver and *protégé*; still less that he was at this moment cold as ice, and quivering with misery from head to foot, because her own lips had just told him she was going to England in the Shannon.

Heart-broken, but still loving nobly, Seaton dragged himself down to the harbor, and went slowly on board the Shannon to secure Miss Rolleston every comfort.

Then, sick at heart as he was, he made inquiries into the condition of the vessel which was to be trusted with so precious a freight; and the old boatman who was rowing him, hearing him make these inquiries, told him he himself was always about, and had noticed the Shannon's pumps were going every blessed night.

Seaton carried this intelligence directly to Lloyd's agent; he overhauled the ship, and ordered her into the graving dock for repairs.

Then Seaton, for White and Co., wrote to Miss Rolleston that the Shannon was not sea-worthy and could not sail for a month, at the least.

The lady simply acknowledged Messrs. White's communication, and Seaton breathed again.

Wardlaw had made Miss Rolleston promise him faithfully to sail that month in his ship the *Shannon*. Now she was a slave to her word, and constant of purpose; so when she found she could not sail in the *Shannon*, she called again on Messrs. White, and took her passage in the *Proserpine*, the essential thing to her mind was to sail when she had promised, and to go in a ship that belonged to her lover.

The *Proserpine* was to sail in ten days.

Seaton inquired into the state of the *Proserpine*. She was a good, sound vessel, and there was no excuse for detaining her.

Then he wrestled long and hard with the selfish part of his great love. Instead of turning sullen, he set himself to carry out Helen Rolleston's will. He went on board the *Proserpine* and chose her the best stern cabin.

General Rolleston had ordered Helen's cabin to be furnished, and the agent had put in the usual things, such as a standing bedstead with drawers beneath, chest of drawers, small table, two chairs, wash-stand, looking-glass, and swinging lamp.

But Seaton made several visits to the ship, and effected the following arrangements at his own cost. He provided a neat cocoa mat for her cabin-deck for comfort and foothold; he unshipped the regular six-paned stern windows, and put in single pane plate glass; he fitted venetian blinds, and hung two little rose-colored curtains to each of the windows; all so arranged as to be easily removed in case it should be necessary to ship dead lights in heavy weather. He glazed the door leading to her bathroom and quarter gallery with plate glass; he provided a light easy-chair, slung and fitted with grommets, to be hung on hooks screwed into the beams in the midship of the cabin. On this Helen could sit and read, and so become insensible to the motion of the ship. He fitted a small bookcase, with a button, which could be raised when a book might be wanted; he fixed a strike-bell in her maid's cabin, communicating with two strikers in Helen's cabin; he selected books, taking care that the voyages and travels were prosperous ones. No "Seaman's Recorder," "Life-boat Journal," or "Shipwrecks and Disasters in the British Navy."

Her cabin was the after-cabin on the starboard side, was entered through the cuddy, had a door communicating with the quarter gallery, two stern windows, and a dead-eye on deck. The maid's cabin was the port after-cabin; doors opened into cuddy and quarter gallery. And a fine trouble Miss Rolleston had to get a maid to accompany her; but at last a young woman offered to go with her for high wages, demurely suppressing the fact that she had just married one of the sailors, and would have gladly gone for nothing. Her name was Jane Holt, and her husband's Michael Donovan.

In one of Seaton's visits to the *Proserpine* he detected the mate and the captain talking together, and looking at him with unfriendly eyes, — scowling at him would hardly be too strong a word.

However, he was in no state of mind to care much how two animals in blue jackets received his acts of self-martyrdom. He was there to do the last kind offices of despairing love for the angel that had crossed his dark path, and illumined it for a moment, to leave it now forever.

At last the fatal evening came; her last in Sydney.

Then Seaton's fortitude, sustained no longer by the feverish stimulus of doing kindly acts for her, began to give way, and he desponded deeply.

At nine in the evening he crept upon General Rolleston's lawn, where he had first seen her. He sat down in sullen despair, upon the very spot.

Then he came nearer the house. There was a lamp in the dining-room; he looked in and saw her.

She was seated at her father's knee, looking up at him fondly; her hand was in his. The tears were in their eyes; she had no mother; he no son; they loved one another devotedly. This, their tender gesture, and their sad silence, spoke volumes to any one that had known sorrow. Poor Seaton sat down on the dewy grass outside, and wept, because she was weeping.

Her father sent her to bed early. Seaton watched, as he had often done before, till her light went out; and then he flung himself on the wet grass, and stared at the sky in utter misery.

The mind is often clearest in the middle of the night; and all of a sudden, he saw, as if written on the sky, that she was going to England expressly to marry Arthur Wardlaw.

At this revelation he started up, stung with hate as well as love, and his tortured mind rebelled furiously. He repeated his vow that this should never be; and soon a scheme came into his head to prevent it; but it was a project so wild and dangerous, that, even as his heated brain hatched it, his cooler judgment said, "Fly, madman, fly! or this love will destroy you!"

He listened to the voice of reason, and in another minute he was out of the premises. He fluttered to his lodgings.

When he got there he could not go in; he turned and fluttered about the streets, not knowing or caring whither; his mind was in a whirl; and, what with his bodily fever, and his boiling heart, passion began to overpower reason, that had held out so gallantly till now. He found himself at the harbor, staring with wild and bloodshot eyes at the *Proserpine*, he who, an hour ago, had seen that he had but one thing to do, — to try and forget young Wardlaw's bride. He groaned aloud, and ran wildly back into the town. He hurried up and down one narrow street, raging inwardly, like some wild beast in its den.

By and by, his mood changed, and he hung round a lamp-post, and fell to moaning and lamenting his hard fate, and hers.

A policeman came up, took him for a maudlin drunkard, and half-advised, half-admonished him to go home.

At that he gave a sort of fierce, despairing snarl, and ran into the next street, to be alone.

In this street he found a shop open, and lighted, though it was but five o'clock in the morning. It was a barber's, whose customers were working people. HAIR-CUTTING, SIXPENCE. EASY SHAVING, THREEPENCE. HOT COFFEE, FOURPENCE THE CUP. Seaton's eye fell upon this shop. He looked at it fixedly a moment from the opposite side of the way, and then hurried on.

He turned suddenly and came back. He crossed the road and entered the shop. The barber was leaning over the stove, removing a can of boiling water from the fire to the hob. He turned at the sound of Seaton's step, and revealed an ugly countenance, rendered sinister by a squint.

Seaton dropped into a chair, and said, "I want my beard taken off."

The man looked at him, if it could be called looking at him, and said, dryly, "O, do ye? How much am I to have for that job?"

"You know your own charge."

"Of course I do; threepence a chin."

"Very well. Be quick then."

"Stop a bit: that is my charge to working folk. I must have something more off you."

"Very well, man, I'll pay you double."

"My price to you is ten shillings."

"Why, what is that for?" asked Seaton, in some alarm; he thought, in his confusion, the man must have read his heart.

"I'll tell ye why," said the squinting barber. "No I won't; I'll show ye." He brought a small mirror, and suddenly clapped it before Seaton's eyes. Seaton started at his own image; wild, ghastly, and the eyes so bloodshot. The barber chuckled. This start was an extorted compliment to his own sagacity. "Now was n't I right?" said he; "did I ought to take the beard off such a mug as that—for less than ten shillings?"

"I see," groaned Seaton; "you think I have committed some crime. One man sees me weeping with misery; he calls me a drunkard; another sees me pale with the anguish of my breaking heart; he calls me a felon: may God's curse light on him and you, and all mankind!"

"All right," said the squinting barber, apathetically; my price is ten bob, whether or no."

Seaton felt in his pockets. "I have not got the money about me," said he.

"O, I'm not particular; leave your watch."

Seaton handed the squinting vampire his watch without another word, and let his head fall upon his breast.

The barber cut his beard close with the scissors, and made trivial remarks from time to time, but received no reply.

At last, Extortion having put him in a good humor, he said, "Don't be so down-hearted, my lad. You are not the first that has got into trouble, and had to change faces."

Seaton vouchsafed no reply.

The barber shaved him clean, and was astonished at the change, and congratulated him. "Nobody will ever know you"; said he, "and I'll tell you why; your mouth it is inclined to turn up a little; now a mustache it bends down, and that alters such a mouth as yours entirely. But, I'll tell you what, taking off this beard shows me something: *you are a gentleman!!* Make it a sovereign, sir."

Seaton staggered out of the place without a word.

"Sulky, eh?" muttered the barber. He gathered up some of the long hair he had cut off Seaton's chin with his scissors, admired it, and put it away in paper.

While thus employed, a regular customer looked in for his cup of coffee. It was the policeman who had taken Seaton for a convivial soul.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL ROLLESTON'S servants made several trips to the Proserpine, carrying boxes, etc.

But Helen herself clung to the house till the last moment. "O papa!" she cried, "I need all my resolution, all my good faith, to keep my word with

Arthur, and leave you. Why, why did I promise? Why am I such a slave to my word?"

"Because," said the old General, with a voice not so firm as usual, "I have always told you that a lady is not to be inferior to a gentleman in any virtue except courage. I've heard my mother say so often; and I've taught it to my Helen. And, my girl, where would be the merit of keeping our word, if we only kept it when it cost us nothing?"

He promised to come after, in three months at farthest, and the brave girl dried her tears, as well as she could, not to add to the sadness he fought against as gallantly as he had often fought the enemies of his country.

The Proserpine was to sail at two o'clock: at a little before one, a gentleman boarded her, and informed the captain that he was a missionary, the Rev. John Hazel, returning home, after a fever; and wished to take a berth in the Proserpine.

The mate looked him full in the face; and then told him there was very little accommodation for passengers, and it had all been secured by White and Co., for a young lady and her servants.

Mr. Hazel replied that his means were small, and moderate accommodation would serve him; but he must go to England without delay.

Captain Hudson put in his gracious word; "Then jump off the jetty at high tide and swim there; no room for black coats in my ship."

Mr. Hazel looked from one to the other piteously. "Show me some mercy, gentlemen; my very life depends on it."

"Very sorry, sir," said the mate; "but it is impossible. There's the Shannon, you can go in her."

"But she is under repairs; so I am told."

"Well, there are a hundred and fifty carpenters on to her; and she will come out of port in our wake."

"Now, sir," said Hudson, roughly, "bundle down the ship's side again if you please; this is a busy time. Hy!—rig the whip; here's the lady coming off to us."

The missionary heaved a deep sigh, and went down into the boat that had brought him. But he was no sooner seated than he ordered the boatmen, somewhat peremptorily, to pull ashore as fast as they could row.

His boat met the Rollestons, father and daughter, coming out, and he turned his pale face, and eyed them as he passed. Helen Rolleston was struck with that sorrowful countenance, and whispered her father, "That poor clergyman has just left the ship." She made sure he had been taking leave of some beloved one, bound for England. General Rolleston looked round, but the boats had passed each other, and the wan face was no longer visible.

They were soon on board, and received with great obsequiousness. Helen was shown her cabin, and, observing the minute and zealous care that had been taken of her comfort, she said, "Somebody, who loves me, has been here," and turned her brimming eyes on her father. He looked quite puzzled; but said nothing.

Father and daughter were then left alone in the cabin, till the ship began to heave her anchor (she lay just at the mouth of the harbor), and then the boatswain was sent to give General Rolleston warning. Helen came up with him, pale and distressed. They exchanged a last embrace, and General Rolleston went down the ship's side. Helen hung over the bulwarks and waved her last adieu, though she could hardly see him for her tears.

At this moment a four-oared boat swept alongside; and Mr. Hazel came on board again. He presented Hudson a written order to give the Rev. John Hazel a passage in the small berth abreast the main hatches. It was signed "For White and Co., James Seaton"; and was indorsed with a stamped acknowledgment of the passage money, twenty-seven pounds.

Hudson, and Wylie the mate, put their heads together over this. The missionary saw them consulting, and told them he had mentioned their mysterious conduct to Messrs. White and Co., and that Mr. Seaton had promised to stop the ship if their authority was resisted. "And I have paid my passage money, and will not be turned out now except by force," said the reverend gentleman, quietly.

Wylie's head was turned away from Mr. Hazel's, and on its profile a most gloomy, vindictive look, so much so, that Mr. Hazel was startled when the man turned his front face to him with a jolly, genial air, and said, "Well, sir, the truth is, we seamen don't want passengers aboard ships of this class; they get in our way whenever it blows a capful. However, since you are here, make yourself as comfortable as you can."

"There, that is enough palaver," said the captain, in his offensive way. "Hoist the parson's traps aboard; and sheer off you. Anchor's peak."

He then gave his orders in stentorian roars; the anchor was hove up, catted, and fished; one sail went up after another, the *Proserpine's* head came round, and away she bore for England with a fair wind.

General Rolleston went slowly and heavily home, and often turned his head and looked wistfully at the ship putting out wing upon wing, and carrying off his child like a tiny prey.

To change the comparison, it was only a tender vine detached from a great sturdy elm: yet the tree, thus relieved of its delicate encumbrance, felt bare; and a soft thing was gone, that, seeking protection, had bestowed warmth; had nestled and curled between the world's cold wind and that stalwart stem.

As soon as he got home he lighted a cigar, and set to work to console himself by reflecting that it was but a temporary parting, since he had virtually resigned his post, and was only waiting in Sydney till he should have handed his papers in order over to his successor, and settled one or two private matters that could not take three months.

When he had smoked his cigar, and reasoned away his sense of desolation, Nature put out her hand, and took him by the breast, and drew him gently up stairs to take a look at his beloved daughter's bedroom, by way of seeing the last of her.

The room had one window looking south, and another west; the latter commanded a view of the sea. General Rolleston looked down at the floor, littered with odds and ends, — the dead leaves of dress that fall about a lady in the great process of packing, — and then gazed through the window at the flying *Proserpine*.

He sighed and lighted another cigar. Before he had half finished it, he stooped down and took up a little bow of ribbon that lay on the ground, and put it quietly in his bosom. In this act he was surprised by Sarah Wilson, who had come up to sweep all such waifs and strays into her own box.

"La, sir," said she, rather crossly, "why did n't you tell me, and I'd have tidied the room: it is all buggermugger, with Miss a leaving."

And with this she went to the wash-hand-stand to

begin. General Rolleston's eye followed her movements, and he observed the water in one of the basins was rather red. "What!" said he, "has she had an accident; cut her finger?"

"No, sir," said Wilson.

"Her nose been bleeding, then?"

"No, sir."

"Not from her finger, — nor — ? let me look."

He examined the basin narrowly, and his countenance fell. "Good heavens!" said he: "I wish I had seen this before; she should not have gone today. Was it the agitation of parting?"

"O no, sir," said Wilson; "don't go to fancy that. Why it is not the first time by a many."

"Not the first!" faltered Rolleston. "In Heaven's name, why was I never told of this?"

"Indeed, sir," said Wilson, eagerly, "you must not blame me, sir. It was as much as my place was worth to tell you. Miss is a young lady that will be obeyed; and she give me strict orders not to let you know: but she is gone now: and I always thought it was a pity she kept it so dark; but, as I was saying, sir, she *would* be obeyed."

"Kept what so dark?"

"Why, sir, her spitting of blood at times: and turning so thin by what she used to be, poor dear young lady."

General Rolleston groaned aloud. "And this she hid from me; from me!" He said no more, but kept looking bewildered and helpless, first at the basin, discolored by his daughter's blood, and then at the *Proserpine*, that was carrying her away, perhaps forever: and at the double sight, his iron features worked with cruel distress; anguish so mute and male, that the woman Wilson, though not good for much, sat down and shed genuine tears of pity.

But he summoned all his fortitude, told Wilson he could not say she was to blame, she had but obeyed her mistress's orders; and we must all obey orders. "But now," said he, "it is me you ought to obey: tell me, does any doctor attend her?"

"None ever comes here, sir. But, one day, she let fall that she went to Dr. Valentine, him that has the name for disorders of the chest."

In a very few minutes General Rolleston was at Doctor Valentine's house, and asked him bluntly what was the matter with his daughter.

"Disease of the lungs," said the doctor, simply.

The unhappy father then begged the doctor to give him his real opinion as to the degree of danger; and Dr. Valentine told him, with some feeling, that the case was not desperate, but was certainly alarming.

Remonstrated with for letting the girl undertake a sea voyage, he replied rather evasively at first; that the air of Sydney disagreed with his patient, and a sea voyage was more likely to do her good than harm, provided the weather was not downright tempestuous.

"And who is to insure me against that?" asked the afflicted father.

"Why, it is a good time of year," said Dr. Valentine; "and delay might have been fatal." Then, after a slight hesitation, "The fact is, sir," said he, "I gathered from her servant that a husband awaits Miss Rolleston in England; and I must tell you, what of course I did not tell her, that the sooner she enters the married state the better. In fact it is her own chance, in my opinion."

General Rolleston pressed the doctor's hand, and went away without another word.

Only he hurried his matters of business; and took his passage in the Shannon.

It was in something of a warrior's spirit that he prepared to follow his daughter and protect her; but often he sighed at the invisible, insidious nature of the foe, and wished it could have been a fair fight of bullets and bayonets, and his own the life at stake.

The Shannon was soon ready for sea.

But the gentleman who was to take General Rolleston's post, met with something better, and declined it.

General Rolleston, though chafing with impatience, had to give up going home in the Shannon. But an influential friend, Mr. Adolphus Savage, was informed of his difficulty, and obtained a year's leave of absence for him, and permission to put young Savage in as his *locum tenens*; which, by the by, is how politic men in general serve their friends.

The Shannon sailed, but not until an incident had occurred that must not be entirely passed over. Old Mr. White called on General Rolleston with a long face, and told him James Seaton had disappeared.

"Stolen anything?"

"Not a shilling. Indeed the last thing the poor fellow did was to give us a proof of his honesty. It seems a passenger paid him twenty-seven pounds for a berth in the *Proserpine*, just before she sailed. Well, sir, he might have put this in his pocket, and nobody been the wiser: but no, he entered the transaction, and the numbers of the notes, and left the notes themselves in an envelope addressed to me. What I am most afraid of is, that some harm has come to him, poor lad."

"What day did he disappear?"

"The 11th of November."

"The day my daughter sailed for England," said General Rolleston, thoughtfully.

"Was it, sir? Yes, I remember. She went in the *Proserpine*."

General Rolleston knitted his brows in silence for some time; then he said, "I'll set the Detectives on his track."

"Not to punish him, General. We do not want him punished."

"To punish him, protect him or avenge him, as the case may require," was the reply, uttered very gravely.

Mr. White took his leave. General Rolleston rang the bell, and directed his servant to go for Hexham, the Detective.

He then rang the bell again, and sent for Sarah Wilson. He put some searching questions to this woman; and his interrogatory had hardly concluded when Hexham was announced. General Rolleston dismissed the girl, and looking now very grave indeed, asked the Detective whether he remembered James Seaton.

"That I do, sir."

"He has levanted."

"Taken much, sir?"

"Not a shilling."

"Gone to the diggings?"

"That you must find out."

"What day was he first missed, sir?"

"Eleventh of November. The very day Miss Rolleston left."

Hexham took out a little greasy note-book, and examined it. "Eleventh of November," said he, "then I almost think I have got a clew, sir; but I

shall know more when I have had a word with two parties." With this he retired.

But he came again at night, and brought General Rolleston some positive information; with this, however, we shall not trouble the reader just here: for General Rolleston himself related it, and the person to whom he did relate it, and the attendant circumstances, gave it a peculiar interest.

Suffice it to say here, that General Rolleston went on board the Shannon, charged with curious information about James Seaton; and sailed for England in the wake of the *Proserpine*, and about two thousand miles astern.

CHAPTER VIII.

WARDLAW was at home before this, with his hands full of business; and it is time the reader should be let into one secret at least, which this merchant had contrived to conceal from the City of London, and from his own father, and from every human creature, except one poor, simple, devoted soul, called Michael Penfold.

There are men, who seem stupid, yet generally go right; there are also clever men, who appear to have the art of blundering wisely: "*sapienter descendunt in infernum*," as the ancients have it; and some of these latter will even lie on their backs, after a fall, and lift up their voices, and prove to you that in the nature of things they ought to have gone up, and their being down is monstrous; illusory.

Arthur Wardlaw was not quite so clever as all that; but still he misconducted the business of the firm with perfect ability from the first month he entered on it. Like those ambitious railways, which ruin a goodly trunk with excess of branches, not to say twigs, he set to work extending, and extending, and sent the sap of the healthy old concern a-flying to the ends of the earth.

He was not only too ambitious, and not cool enough; he was also unlucky, or under a curse, or something; for things, well conceived, broke down, in his hands, under petty accidents. And, besides, his new correspondents and agents hit him cruelly hard. Then what did he? Why, shot good money after bad, and lost both. He could not retrench, for his game was concealment; his father, was kept in the dark, and drew his four thousand a year, as usual, and, upon any hesitation, in that respect, would have called in an accountant and wound up the concern. But this tax upon the receipts, though inconvenient, was a trifle compared with the series of heavy engagements that were impending. The future was so black, that Wardlaw junior was sore tempted to realize twenty thousand pounds, which a man in his position could easily do, and fly the country. But this would have been to give up Helen Rolleston; and he loved her too well. His brain was naturally subtle and fertile in expedients; so he brought all its powers to bear on a double problem; how to marry Helen; and restore the concern he had mismanaged to its former state. For this, a large sum of money was needed, not less than £90,000.

The difficulties were great; but he entered on this project with two advantages. In the first place, he enjoyed excellent credit; in the second, he was not disposed to be scrupulous. He had been cheated several times; and nothing undermines feeble rectitude more than that. Such a man as Wardlaw is apt to establish a sort of account current with humanity.

"Several fellow-creatures have cheated me. Well, I must get as much back, by hook or by crook, from several fellow-creatures."

After much hard thought, he conceived his double master-stroke: and it was to execute this he went out to Australia.

We have seen that he persuaded Helen Rolleston to come to England and be married; but, as to the other part of his project, that is a matter for the reader to watch, as it develops itself.

His first act of business, on reaching England, was to insure the freights of the *Proserpine* and the *Shannon*.

He sent Michael Penfold to Lloyd's, with the requisite vouchers, including the receipts of the gold merchants. Penfold easily insured the *Shannon*, whose freight was valued at only six thousand pounds. The *Proserpine*, with her cargo, and a hundred and thirty thousand pounds of specie to boot, was another matter. Some underwriters had an objection to specie, being subject to theft as well as shipwreck; other underwriters, applied to by Penfold, acquiesced; others called on Wardlaw himself, to ask a few questions, and he replied to them courteously, but with a certain nonchalance, treating it as an affair which might be big to them, but was not of particular importance to a merchant doing business on his scale.

To one underwriter, Condell, with whom he was on somewhat intimate terms, he said, "I wish I could insure the *Shannon*, at her value; but that is impossible: the City of London could not do it. The *Proserpine* brings me some cases of specie, but my true treasure is on board the *Shannon*. She carries my bride, sir."

"O indeed! Miss Rolleston?"

"Ah, I remember; you have seen her. Then you will not be surprised at a proposal I shall make you. Underwrite the *Shannon* a million pounds, to be paid by you if harm befalls my Helen. You need not look so astonished; I was only joking; you gentlemen deal with none but substantial values; and, as for me, a million would no more compensate me for losing her, than for losing my own life."

The tears were in his pale eyes as he said these words; and Mr. Condell eyed him with sympathy. But he soon recovered himself, and was the man of business again. "O, the specie on board the *Proserpine*? Well, I was in Australia, you know, and bought that specie myself of the merchants whose names are attached to the receipts. I deposited the cases with White and Co., at Sydney. Penfold will show you the receipt. I instructed Joseph Wylie, mate of the *Proserpine*, and a trustworthy person, to see them stowed away in the *Proserpine*, by White and Co. Hudson is a good seaman; and the *Proserpine* a new ship, built by Mare. We have nothing to fear but the ordinary perils of the sea."

"So one would think," said Mr. Condell, and took his leave; but, at the door, he hesitated, and then, looking down a little sheepishly, said, "Mr. Wardlaw, may I offer you a piece of advice?"

"Certainly."

"Then, double the insurance on the *Shannon*, if you can."

With these words he slipped out, evidently to avoid questions he did not intend to answer.

Wardlaw stared after him, stupidly at first, and then stood up and put his hand to his head in a sort of amazement. Then he sat down again, ashy pale, and with the dew on his forehead, and muttered

faintly, "Double—the insurance—of the—*Shannon*!"

Men who walk in crooked paths are very subject to such surprises; doomed, like Ahab, to be pierced, through the joints of their armor, by random shafts; by words uttered in one sense, but conscience interprets them in another.

It took a good many underwriters to insure the *Proserpine's* freight; but the business was done at last.

Then Wardlaw, who had feigned *insouciance* so admirably in that part of his interview with Condell, went, without losing an hour, and raised a large sum of money on the insured freight, to meet the bills that were coming due for the gold (for he had paid for most of it in paper at short dates), and also other bills that were approaching maturity. This done, he breathed again, safe for a month or two from everything short of a general panic, and full of hope from his coming master-stroke. But two months soon pass when a man has a flock of kites in the air. Pass? They fly. So now he looked out anxiously for his Australian ships; and went to Lloyd's every day to hear if either had been seen, or heard of by steamers, or by faster sailing vessels than themselves.

And, though Condell had underwritten the *Proserpine* to the tune of eight thousand pounds, yet still his mysterious words rang strangely in the merchant's ears, and made him so uneasy, that he employed a discreet person to sound Condell as to what he meant by "double the insurance of the *Shannon*."

It turned out to be the simplest affair in the world; Condell had secret information that the *Shannon* was in bad repairs, so he had advised his friend to insure her heavily. For the same reason, he declined to underwrite her freight himself.

With respect to those ships, our readers already know two things, of which Wardlaw himself, *notobene*, had no idea; namely, that the *Shannon* had sailed last, instead of first, and that Miss Rolleston was not on board of her, but in the *Proserpine*, two thousand miles ahead.

To that, your superior knowledge, we, posters of the sea and land, are about to make a large addition, and relate things strange, but true. While that anxious and plotting merchant strains his eyes seaward, trying hard to read the future, we carry you, in a moment of time, across the Pacific, and board the leading vessel, the good ship *Proserpine*, homeward bound.

The ship left Sydney with a fair wind, but soon encountered adverse weather, and made slow progress, being close-hauled, which was her worst point of sailing. She pitched a good deal, and that had a very ill effect on Miss Rolleston. She was no sea-sick, but thoroughly out of sorts: and, in one week, became perceptibly paler and thinner than when she started.

The young clergyman, Mr. Hazel, watched her with respectful anxiety, and this did not escape her feminine observation. She noted quietly that those dark eyes of his followed her with a mournful tenderness, but withdrew their gaze when she looked at him. Clearly, he was interested in her, but had no desire to intrude upon her attention. He would bring up the squabs for her, and some of his own wraps, when she stayed on deck, and was prompt with his arm when the vessel lurched and showed

her those other little attentions, which are called for on board ship, but without a word. Yet, when she thanked him in the simplest and shortest way, his great eyes flashed with pleasure, and the color mounted to his very temples.

Engaged young ladies are, for various reasons, more sociable with the other sex, than those who are still on the universal mock-defensive: a ship, like a distant country, thaws even English reserve, and women in general are disposed to admit ecclesiastics to certain privileges. No wonder then that Miss Rolleston, after a few days, met Mr. Hazel half way; and they made acquaintance on board the *Proserpine*, in monosyllables at first; but, the ice once fairly broken, the intercourse of mind became rather rapid.

At first it was a mere intellectual exchange, but one very agreeable to Miss Rolleston; for a fine memory, and omnivorous reading from his very boyhood, with the habit of taking notes, and reviewing them, had made Mr. Hazel a walking dictionary, and a walking essayist if required.

But, when it came to something, which most of all the young lady had hoped from this temporary acquaintance, viz. religious instruction, she found him indeed as learned on that as on other topics, but cold, and devoid of unction: so much so, that one day she said to him, "I can hardly believe you have ever been a missionary." But at that he seemed so distressed, that she was sorry for him, and said, sweetly, "Excuse me, Mr. Hazel, my remark was in rather bad taste, I fear."

"Not at all," said he. "Of course I am unfit for missionary work, or I should not be here."

Miss Rolleston took a good look at him, but said nothing. However, his reply and her perusal of his countenance, satisfied her that he was a man with very little petty vanity and petty irritability.

One day they were discoursing of gratitude; and Mr. Hazel said he had a poor opinion of those persons, who speak of "the burden of gratitude," and make a fuss about being "laid under an obligation."

"As for me," said he, "I have owed such a debt, and found the sense of it very sweet."

"But perhaps you were always hoping to make a return," said Helen.

"That I was: hoping against hope."

"Do you think people are grateful, in general?"

"No, Miss Rolleston, I do not."

"Well, I think they are. To me at least. Why, I have experienced gratitude even in a convict. It was a poor man, who had been transported, for something or other, and he begged papa to take him for his gardener. Papa did, and he was so grateful that, do you know, he suspected our house was to be robbed, and he actually watched in the garden night after night: and, what do you think? the house *was* attacked by a whole gang; but poor Mr. Seaton confronted them and shot one, and was wounded cruelly; but he beat them off for us; and was not that gratitude?"

While she was speaking so earnestly, Mr. Hazel's blood seemed to run through his veins like heavenly fire, but he said nothing, and the lady resumed with gentle fervor, "Well, we got him a clerk's place in a shipping-office, and heard no more of him; but he did not forget us; my cabin here was fitted up with every comfort, and every delicacy. I thanked papa for it; but he looked so blank, I saw directly, he knew nothing about it; and now, I think of it, it was Mr. Seaton. I am positive it was. Poor fel-

low! And I should not even know him if I saw him."

Mr. Hazel observed, in a low voice, that Mr. Seaton's conduct did not seem wonderful to him. "Still," said he, "one is glad to find there is some good left even in a criminal."

"A criminal!" cried Helen Rolleston, firing up. "Pray, who says he was a criminal? Mr. Hazel, once for all, no friend of mine ever deserves such a name as that. A friend of mine may commit some great error or imprudence; but that is all. The poor grateful soul was never guilty of any downright wickedness: *that stands to reason.*"

Mr. Hazel did not encounter this feminine logic with his usual ability; he muttered something or other, with a trembling lip, and left her so abruptly, that she asked herself whether she had inadvertently said anything that could have offended him; and awaited an explanation. But none came. The topic was never revived by Mr. Hazel; and his manner, at their next meeting, showed he liked her none the worse that she stood up for her friends.

The wind steady from the west for two whole days, and the *Proserpine* showed her best sailing qualities, and ran four hundred and fifty miles in that time.

Then came a dead calm, and the sails flapped lazily, and the masts described an arc; and the sun broiled; and the sailors whistled; and the Captain drank; and the mate encouraged him.

During this calm, Miss Rolleston fell downright ill, and quitted the deck. Then Mr. Hazel was very sad: borrowed all the books in the ship, and read them, and took notes; and when he had done this, he was at leisure to read men, and so began to study Hiram Hudson, Joseph Wylie, and others, and take a few notes about them.

From these we select some that are better worth the reader's attention than anything we could relate in our own persons at this stagnant part of the story.

PASSAGES FROM MR. HAZEL'S DIARY.

"CHARACTERS ON BOARD THE PROSERPINE.

"There are two sailors, messmates, who have formed an antique friendship; their names are John Welch and Samuel Cooper. Welch is a very able seaman and a chatterbox. Cooper is a good sailor, but very silent; only what he does say is much to the purpose.

"The gabble of Welch is agreeable to the silent Cooper; and Welch admires Cooper's taciturnity.

"I asked Welch what made him like Cooper so much. And he said, 'Why, you see, sir, he is my messmate, for one thing, and a seaman that knows his work; and then he has been well eddycated, and he knows when to hold his tongue, does Sam.'

"I asked Cooper why he was so fond of Welch. He only grunted in an uneasy way at first; but when I pressed for a reply, he let out two words, — 'Capital company'; and got away from me.

"Their friendship, though often roughly expressed, is really a tender and touching sentiment. I think either of these sailors would bare his back and take a dozen lashes in place of his messmate. I too once thought I had made such a friend. Eheu.

"Both Cooper and Welch seem, by their talk, to consider the ship a living creature. Cooper chews. Welch only smokes, and often lets his pipe out: he is so voluble.

"Captain Hudson is quite a character: or, I might say, two characters; for he is one man when he is sober, and another when he is the worse for liquor: and that I am sorry to see is very often. Captain Hudson, sober, is a rough, bearish seaman, with a quick, experienced eye, that takes in every rope in the ship, as he walks up and down his quarter-deck. He either evades, or bluntly declines conversation, and gives his whole mind to sailing his ship.

"Captain Hudson, drunk, is a garrulous man, who seems to have drifted back into the past. He comes up to you and talks of his own accord, and always about himself, and what he did fifteen or twenty years since. He forgets whatever has occurred half an hour ago; and his eye, which was an eagle's is now a mole's. He no longer sees what his sailors are doing aloft or aloft; to be sure he no longer cares; his present ship may take care of herself while he is talking of his past ones. But the surest indicia of inebriety in Hudson are these two. First, his nose is red. Secondly, he discourses upon a seaman's duty to his employers. Ebruius rings the changes on his 'duty to his employers' till drowsiness attacks his hearers. *Cicero de officiis* was all very well at a certain period of one's life: but *bibulus nauia de officiis* is rather too much.

"N. B. Except when his nose is red, not a word about his 'duty to his employers.' That phrase, like a fine lady, never ventures into the morning air. It is purely post-prandial, and sacred to occasions when he is utterly neglecting his duty to his employers, and to everybody else.

"All this is ridiculous enough but somewhat alarming. To think that *her* precious life should be intrusted to the care and skill of so unreliable a captain!

"Joseph Wylie, the mate, is less eccentric, but even more remarkable. He is one of those powerfully built fellows, whom Nature, one would think, constructed to gain all their ends by force and directness. But no such thing; he goes about as softly as a cat; is always popping up out of holes and corners; and I can see he watches me, and tries to hear what I say to her. He is civil to me when I speak to him; yet, I notice, he avoids me quietly. Altogether, there is something about him that puzzles me. Why was he so reluctant to let me on board as a passenger? Why did he tell a downright falsehood? For he said there was no room for me; yet, even now, there are two cabins vacant, and he has taken possession of them.

"The mate of this ship has several barrels of spirits in his cabin, or rather, cabins, and it is he who makes the captain drunk. I learned this from one of the boys. This looks ugly. I fear Wylie is a bad, designing man, who wishes to ruin the captain, and so get his place. But, meantime, the ship might be endangered by this drunkard's misconduct. I shall watch Wylie closely, and perhaps put the captain on his guard against this false friend.

"Last night, a breeze got up about sunset, and H. R. came on deck for half an hour. I welcomed her as calmly as I could; but I felt my voice tremble and my heart throb. She told me the voyage tired her much; but it was the last she should have to make. How strange, how hellish (God forgive me for saying so!) it seems that *she* should love him. But, does she love him? Can she love him? Could she love him if she knew all? Know him she shall

before she marries him. For the present, he still, my heart.

"She soon went below and left me desolate. I wandered all about the ship, and, at last, I came upon the inseparables, Welch and Cooper. They were squatted on the deck, and Welch's tongue was going as usual. He was talking about this Wylie, and saying that, in all his ships, he had never known such a mate as this; why the captain was under his thumb. He then gave a string of captains, each of whom would have given his mate a round dozen at the gangway, if he had taken so much on him, as this one does.

"Grog!" suggested Cooper, in extenuation.

"Welch admitted Wylie was liberal with that and friendly enough with the men; but, still, he preferred to see a ship commanded by the captain, and not by a lubber like Wylie.

"I expressed some surprise at this term, and said I had envied Wylie's nerves in a gale of wind we encountered early in the voyage.

"The talking sailor explained, 'In course, he has been to sea afore this, and weathered many a gale. But so has the cook. 'That don't make a man a sailor.' You ask him how to send down a to'-gallant yard or gammon a bowsprit, or even mark a lead line, and he'll stare at ye, like Old Nick, when the angel caught him with the red-hot tongue, and questioned him out of the Church Catechism. Ask Sam there, if ye don't believe me. Sam, what do you think of this Wylie for a seaman?'

Cooper could not afford anything so precious, in his estimate of things, as a word; but he lifted a great brawny hand, and gave a snap with his finger and thumb, that disposed of the mate's pretensions to seamanship more expressively than words could have done it.

"The breeze has freshened, and the ship glides rapidly through the water, bearing us all homeward. Helen Rolleston has resumed her place upon the deck; and all seems bright again. I ask myself how we existed without the sight of her.

"This morning the wind shifted to the south-west; the captain surprised us by taking in sail. But his sober eye had seen something more than ours; for at noon it blew a gale, and by sunset it was deemed prudent to bring the ship's head to the wind, and we are now lying-to. The ship lurches and the wind howls through the bare rigging; but she rides buoyantly, and no danger is apprehended.

"Last night, as I lay in my cabin, unable to sleep I heard some heavy blows strike the ship's side repeatedly, causing quite a vibration. I felt alarmed, and went out to tell the captain. But I was obliged to go on my hands and knees, such was the force of the wind. Passing the mate's cabin, I heard sounds that made me listen acutely; and I then found the blows were being struck inside the ship. I got to the captain and told him. 'O,' said he, 'ten to one it's the mate nailing down his chests, or the like.' But I assured him the blows struck the side of the ship, and, at my earnest request, he came out and listened. He swore a great oath, and said the lubber would be through the ship's side. He then tried the cabin-door, but it was locked.

"The sounds ceased directly.

"We called to the mate, but received no reply for a long time. At last Wylie came out of the gun-room, looking rather pale, and asked what was the matter.

"I told him he ought to know best, for the blows were heard here he had just come from.

" 'Blows!' said he; 'I believe you. Why, a tierce of butter had got adrift, and was bumping up and down the hold like thunder.' He then asked us whether that was what we had disturbed him for, entered his cabin, and almost slammed the door in our faces.

"I remarked to the captain on his disrespectful conduct. The captain was civil, and said I was right; he was a cross-grained, unmanageable brute, and he wished he was out of the ship. 'But you see, sir, he has got the ear of the merchant ashore; and so I am obliged to hold a candle to the Devil, as the saying is.' He then fired a volley of oaths and abuse at the offender; and, not to encourage foul language, I retired to my cabin.

"The wind declined towards daybreak, and the ship recommenced her voyage at 8 A. M.; but under treble-reefed topsails and reefed courses.

"I caught the captain and mate talking together in the friendliest way possible. That Hudson is a humbug; there is some mystery between him and the mate.

"To-day H. R. was on deck for several hours, conversing sweetly, and looking like the angel she is. But happiness soon flies from me; a steamer came in sight, bound for Sydney. She signalled us to heave-to, and send a boat. This was done, and the boat brought back a letter for *her*. It seems they took us for the Shannon, in which ship she was expected.

"The letter was from *him*. How her cheek flushed and her eye beamed as she took it. And O the sadness, the agony, that stood beside her unheeded.

"I left the deck; I could not have contained myself. What a thing is wealth! By wealth, that wretch can stretch out his hand across the ocean, and put a letter into her hand under my very eye. Away goes all that I have gained by being near her, while he is far away. He is not in England now, — he is here. His odious presence has driven me from her. O that I could be a child again, or in my grave, to get away from this Hell of Love and Hate."

At this point, we beg leave to take the narrative into our own hands again.

Mr. Hazel actually left the deck to avoid the sight of Helen Rolleston's flushed cheek and beaming eyes, reading Arthur Wardlaw's letter.

And here we may as well observe that he retired not merely because the torture was hard to bear. He had some disclosures to make, on reaching England; but his good sense told him this was not the time, or the place, to make them, nor Helen Rolleston the person to whom, in the first instance, they ought to be made.

While he tries to relieve his swelling heart by putting its throbs on paper (and, in truth, this is some faint relief, for want of which many a less unhappy man than Hazel has gone mad), let us stay by the lady's side, and read her letter with her.

"RUSSELL SQUARE, Dec. 15, 1846.

"MY DEAR LOVE: Hearing that the Antelope steam-packet was going to Sydney, by way of Cape Horn, I have begged the captain, who is under some obligations to me, to keep a good look-out for the Shannon, homeward bound, and board her with these lines, weather permitting.

"Of course, the chances are you will not receive

them at sea; but still you possibly may; and my heart is so full of you, I seize any excuse for overflowing; and then I picture to myself that bright face reading an unexpected letter in mid ocean, and so I taste beforehand the greatest pleasure my mind can conceive, — the delight of giving you pleasure, my own sweet Helen.

"News, I have very little. You know how deeply and devotedly you are beloved, — know it so well that I feel words are almost wasted in repeating it. Indeed, the time, I hope, is at hand when the word love will hardly be mentioned between us. For my part, I think it will be too visible in every act, and look, and word of mine, to need repetition. We do not speak much about the air we live in. We breathe it, and speak with it, not of it.

"I suppose all lovers are jealous. I think I should go mad if you were to give me a rival; but then I do not understand that ill-natured jealousy which would rob the beloved object of all affections but the one. I know my Helen loves her father, — loves him, perhaps, as well, or better, than she does me. Well, in spite of that, I love him too. Do you know, I never see that erect form, that model of courage and probity come into a room, but I say to myself, 'Here comes my benefactor; but for this man there would be no Helen in the world.' Well, dearest, an unexpected circumstance has given me a little military influence (these things do happen in the City); and I really believe that, what with his acknowledged merits (I am secretly informed a very high personage said, the other day, he had not received justice), and the influence I speak of, a post will shortly be offered to your father that will enable him to live, henceforth, in England, with comfort, I might say, affluence. Perhaps he might live with us. That depends upon himself.

"Looking forward to this, and my own still greater happiness, diverts my mind a while from the one ever-pressing anxiety. But, alas! it will return. By this time my Helen is on the seas, — the terrible, the treacherous, the cruel seas, that spare neither beauty nor virtue, nor the longing hearts at home. I have conducted this office for some years, and thought I knew care and anxiety. But I find I knew neither till now.

"I have two ships at sea, the Shannon and the Proserpine. The Proserpine carries eighteen chests of specie, worth a hundred and thirty thousand pounds. I don't care one straw whether she sinks or swims. But the Shannon carries my darling; and every gust at night awakens me, and every day I go into the great room at Lloyd's and watch the anemometer. O God! be merciful, and bring my angel safe to me! O God! be just, and strike her not for my offences!

"Besides the direct perils of the sea are some others you might escape by prudence. Pray avoid the night air, for my sake, who could not live if any evil befell you; and be careful in your diet. You were not looking so well as usual, when I left. Would I had words to make you know your own value. Then you would feel it a *duty* to be prudent.

"But I must not sadden you with my fears; let me turn to my hopes. How bright they are; what joy, what happiness, is sailing towards me, nearer and nearer every day. I ask myself what am I that such paradise should be mine.

"My love, when we are one, shall we share every thought, or shall I keep commerce, speculation, and its temptations away from your pure spirit?

Sometimes I think I should like to have neither thought nor occupation unshared by you; and that you would purify trade itself by your contact; at other times I say to myself, 'O, never soil that angel with your miserable business; but go home to her as if you were going from earth to heaven, for a few blissful hours.' But you shall decide this question, and every other.

"Must I close this letter? Must I say no more though I have scarcely begun?"

"Yes, I will end, since, perhaps, you will never see it."

"When I have sealed it, I mean to hold it in my clasped hands, and so pray the Almighty to take it safe to you, and to bring you safe to him, who can never know peace nor joy till he sees you once more."

"Your devoted and anxious lover,"

"ARTHUR WARDLAW."

Helen Rolleston read this letter more than once. She liked it none the less for being disconnected and unbusiness-like. She had seen her Arthur's business letters; models of courteous conciseness. She did not value such compositions. This one she did. She smiled over it, all beaming and blushing; she kissed it, and read it again, and sat with it in her lap.

But, by and by, her mood changed, and, when Mr. Hazel ventured upon deck again, he found her with her forehead sinking on her extended arm, and the lax hand of that same arm holding the letter. She was crying.

The whole drooping attitude was so lovely, so feminine, yet so sad, that Hazel stood irresolute, looking wistfully at her.

She caught sight of him, and, by a natural impulse, turned gently away, as if to hide her tears. But, the next moment, she altered her mind, and said, with a quiet dignity that came naturally to her at times, "Why should I hide my care from you, sir? Mr. Hazel, may I speak to you as a *clergyman*?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Hazel, in a somewhat faint voice.

She pointed to a seat and he sat down near her.

She was silent for some time; her lip quivered a little; she was struggling inwardly for that decent composure, which on certain occasions, distinguishes the lady from the mere woman; and it was with a pretty firm voice she said what follows:—

"I am going to tell you a little secret: one I have kept from my own father. It is,—that I have not very long to live."

Her hazel eye rested calmly on his face while she said these words quietly.

He received them with amazement, at first; amazement, that soon deepened into horror. "What do you mean?" he gasped. "What words are these?"

"Thank you for minding so much," said she, sweetly. "I will tell you. I have fits of coughing, not frequent, but violent; and then blood very often comes from my lungs. That is a bad sign, you know. I have been so for four months now, and I am a good deal wasted; my hand used to be very plump, look at it now. — Poor Arthur!"

She turned away her head to drop a gentle, unselfish tear or two; and Hazel stared with increasing alarm at the lovely but wasted hand she still held out to him, and glanced, too, at Arthur Wardlaw's letter, held slightly by the beloved fingers.

He said nothing, and, when she looked round

again, he was pale and trembling. The revelation was so sudden.

"Pray be calm, sir," said she. "We need speak of this no more. But, now, I think, you will not be surprised that I come to you for religious advice and consolation, short as our acquaintance is."

"I am in no condition to give them," said Hazel, in great agitation. "I can think of nothing but how to save you. May Heaven help me, and give me wisdom for that."

"This is idle," said Helen Rolleston, gently, but firmly. "I have had the best advice for months, and I get worse; and, Mr. Hazel, I shall never be better. So, aid me to bow to the will of Heaven. Sir, I do not repine at leaving the world; but it does grieve me to think how my departure will affect those whose happiness is very, very dear to me."

She then looked at the letter, blushed, and hesitated a moment; but ended by giving it to him whom she had applied to as her religious adviser.

"Oblige me by reading that. And, when you have, I think you will grant me a favor I wish to ask you. Poor fellow! so full of hopes that I am doomed to disappoint."

She rose to hide her emotion, and left Arthur Wardlaw's letter in the hands of him who loved her, if possible, more devotedly than Arthur Wardlaw did; and she walked the deck pensively, little dreaming how strange a thing she had done.

As for Hazel, he was in a situation poignant with agony; only the heavy blow that had just fallen had stunned and benumbed him. He felt a natural repugnance to read this letter. But she had given him no choice. He read it. In reading it he felt a mortal sickness come over him, but he persevered; he read it carefully to the end, and he was examining the signature keenly, when Miss Rolleston rejoined him, and, taking the letter from him, placed it in her bosom before his eyes.

"He loves me; does he not?" said she, wistfully.

Hazel looked half-stupidly in her face for a moment; then, with a candor which was part of his character, replied, doggedly, "Yes, the man who wrote that letter loves you."

"Then you can pity him, and I may venture to ask you the favor to — It will be a bitter grief and disappointment to him. Will you break it to him as gently as you can; will you say that his Helen — Will you tell him what I have told you?"

"I decline."

This point-blank refusal surprised Helen Rolleston; all the more that it was uttered with a certain sullenness, and even asperity, she had never seen till then in this gentle clergyman.

It made her fear she had done wrong in asking it; and she looked ashamed and distressed.

However, the explanation soon followed.

"My business," said he, "is to prolong your precious life; and, making up your mind to die is not the way. You shall have no encouragement in such weakness from me. Pray let me be your physician."

"Thank you," said Helen, coldly; "I have my own physician."

"No doubt: but he shows me his incapacity, by allowing you to live on pastry and sweets; things that are utter poison to you. Disease of the lungs is curable, but not by drugs and unwholesome food."

"Mr. Hazel," said the lady, "we will drop the

subject, if you please. It has taken an uninteresting turn."

"To you, perhaps; but not to me."

"Excuse me, sir; if you took that real friendly interest in me and my condition I was vain enough to think you might, you would hardly have refused me the first favor I ever asked you; and, drawing herself up proudly, "need I say the last?"

"You are unjust," said Hazel, sadly; "unjust beyond endurance. I refuse you anything that is for your good? I, who would lay down my life with unmixed joy for you?"

"Mr. Hazel!" And she drew back from him with a haughty stare.

"Learn the truth why I cannot, and will not, talk to Arthur Wardlaw about you. For one thing, he is my enemy, and I am his."

"His enemy? my Arthur's!"

"His mortal enemy. And I am going to England to clear an innocent man, and expose Arthur Wardlaw's guilt."

"Indeed!" said Helen with lofty contempt. "And pray what has he done to you?"

"He had a benefactor, a friend; he entrapped him into cashing a note of hand, which he must have known, or suspected to be, forged; then basely deserted him at the trial, and blasted his friend's life forever."

"Arthur Wardlaw did that?"

"He did; and that very James Seaton was his victim."

Her delicate nostrils were expanded with wrath and her eyes flashed fire. "Mr. Hazel, you are a liar and a slanderer."

The man gave a kind of shudder, as if cold steel had passed through his heart. But his fortitude was great; he said, doggedly, "Time will show. Time, and a jury of our countrymen."

"I will be his witness. I will say, this is the malice of a rival. Yes, sir, you forget that you have let out the motive of this wicked slander. You love me yourself; Heaven forgive me for profaning the name of love!"

"Heaven forgive you for blaspheming the purest, fondest love, that ever one creature laid at the feet of another. Yes, Helen Rolleston, I love you; and will save you from the grave and from the villain Wardlaw; both from one and the other."

"O, said Helen," clenching her teeth, "I hope this is true; I hope you do love me, you wretch; then I may find a way to punish you for belying the absent, and stabbing me to the heart, through him."

Her throat swelled with a violent convulsion, and she could utter no more for a moment; and she put her white handkerchief to her lips, and drew it away discolored slightly with blood.

"Ah! you love me," she cried; "then know, for your comfort, that you have shortened my short life a day or two, by slandering him to my face, you monster. Look there at your love, and see what it has done for me."

She put the handkerchief under his eyes, with hate gleaming in her own.

Mr. Hazel turned ashy pale, and glared at it with horror; he could have seen his own shed, with stoical firmness; but a mortal sickness struck his heart at the sight of her blood. His hands rose and quivered in a peculiar way, his sight left him, and the strong man, but tender lover, staggered, and fell heavily on the deck, in a dead swoon, and lay at her feet, pale and motionless.

She uttered a scream, and sailors came running.

They lifted him, with rough sympathy; and Helen Rolleston retired to her cabin, panting with agitation. But she had little or no pity for the slanderer. She read Arthur Wardlaw's letter again, kissed it, wept over it, reproached herself for not having loved the writer enough; and vowed to repair that fault. "Poor slandered Arthur," said she; "from this hour I will love you as devotedly as you love me."

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER this, Helen Rolleston and Mr. Hazel never spoke. She walked past him on the deck with cold and haughty contempt.

He quietly submitted to it; and never presumed to say one word to her again. Only, as his determination was equal to his delicacy, Miss Rolleston found, one day, a paper on her table, containing advice as to the treatment of disordered lungs, expressed with accurate coldness, and backed by a string of medical authorities, quoted memoriter.

She sent this back directly, indorsed with a line, in pencil, that she would try hard to live, now she had a friend to protect from calumny; but should use her own judgment as to the means.

Yet women will be women. She had carefully taken a copy of his advice, before she cast it out with scorn.

He replied, "Live, with whatever motive you please; only live."

To this she vouchsafed no answer; nor did this unhappy man trouble her again, until an occasion of a very different kind arose.

One fine night, he sat on the deck, with his back against the mainmast, in deep melancholy and listlessness, and fell, at last, into a doze, from which he was awakened by a peculiar sound below. It was a beautiful and still night; all sounds were magnified; and the father of all rats seemed to be gnawing the ship down below.

Hazel's curiosity was excited, and he went softly down the ladder to see what the sound really was. But that was not so easy, for it proved to be below decks; but he saw a light glimmering through a small scuttle above the mate's cabin, and the sounds were in the neighborhood of that light.

It now flashed upon Mr. Hazel that this was the very quarter where he had heard that mysterious knocking when the ship was lying-to in the gale.

Upon this a certain degree of vague suspicion began to mingle with his curiosity.

He stood still a moment, listening acutely; then took off his shoes very quietly, and moved with noiseless foot towards the scuttle.

The gnawing still continued.

He put his head through the scuttle, and peered into a dark, dismal place, whose very existence was new to him. It was, in fact, a vacant space between the cargo and the ship's run. This wooden cavern was very narrow, but not less than fifteen feet long. The candle was at the farther end, and between it and Hazel, a man was working, with his flank turned towards the spectator. This partly intercepted the light; but still it revealed in a fitful way the huge ribs of the ship, and her inner skin, that formed the right-hand partition, so to speak, of this black cavern; and close outside those gaunt timbers, was heard the wash of the sea.

There was something solemn in the close prox-

imity of that tremendous element and the narrowness of the wooden barrier.

The bare place, and the gentle, monotonous wash of the liquid monster, on that calm night, conveyed to Mr. Hazel's mind a thought akin to David's.

"As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death."

Judge whether that thought grew weaker or stronger, when, after straining his eyes for some time, to understand what was going on at that midnight hour, in that hidden place, he saw who was the workman, and what was his occupation.

It was Joseph Wylie, the mate. His profile was illuminated by the candle, and looked ghastly. He had in his hands an auger of enormous size, and with this he was drilling a great hole through the ship's side, just below the water-mark; an act, the effect of which would be to let the sea bodily into the ship and sink her, with every soul on board, to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

"I was stupefied; and my hairs stood on end, and my tongue clove to my jaws."

Thus does one of Virgil's characters describe the effect his mind produced upon his body, in a terrible situation.

Mr. Hazel had always ridiculed that trite line as a pure exaggeration; but he altered his opinion after that eventful night.

When he first saw what Wylie was doing, *obstupuit*, he was merely benumbed; but, as his mind realized the fiendish nature of the act, and its tremendous consequences, his hair actually bristled, and for a few minutes at least, he could not utter a word.

In that interval of stupor, matters took another turn. The auger went in up to the haft: then Wylie caught up with his left hand a wooden plug he had got ready, jerked the auger away, caught up a hammer, and swiftly inserted the plug.

Rapid as he was, a single jet of water came squirting viciously in. But Wylie lost no time; he tapped the plug smartly with his hammer several times, and then, lifting a mallet with both hands, rained heavy blows on it that drove it in, and shook the ship's side.

Then Hazel found his voice, and he uttered an ejaculation that made the mate look round; he glared at the man, who was glaring at him, and, staggering backward, trod on the light, and all was darkness and dead silence.

All but the wash of the sea outside, and that louder than ever.

But a short interval sufficed to restore one of the parties to his natural self-possession.

"Lord, sir," said Wylie, "how you startled me! You should not come upon a man at his work like that. We might have had an accident."

"What were you doing?" said Hazel, in a voice that quavered in spite of him.

"Repairing the ship. Found a crack or two in her inner skin. There, let me get a light, and I'll explain it to you, sir."

He groped his way out, and invited Mr. Hazel into his cabin. There he struck a light, and, with great civility, tendered an explanation. The ship, he said, had labored a good deal in the last gale, and he had discovered one or two flaws in her, which were of no immediate importance; but experience had taught him that in calm weather a ship ought to be kept tight. "As they say ashore, a stitch in time saves nine."

"But drilling holes in her is not the way," said Hazel, sternly.

The mate laughed. "Why, sir," said he, "what other way is there? We cannot stop an irregular crack; we can frame nothing to fit it. The way is to get ready a plug measured a trifle larger than the aperture you are going to make; then drill a round hole, and force in the plug. I know no other way than that; and I was a ship's carpenter for ten years before I was a mate."

This explanation, and the manner in which it was given, removed Mr. Hazel's apprehensions for the time being. "It was very alarming," said he; "but I suppose you know your business."

"Nobody better, sir," said Wylie. "Why, it is not one seaman in three that would trouble his head about a flaw in a ship's inner skin; but I'm a man that looks ahead. Will you have a glass of grog, sir, now you are here? I keep that under my eye, too; between ourselves, if the skipper had as much in his cabin as I have here, that might be worse for us all than a crack or two in the ship's inner skin."

Mr. Hazel declined to drink grog at that time in the morning, but wished him good night, and left him with a better opinion of him than he had ever had till then.

Wylie, when he was gone, drew a tumbler of neat spirits, drank half, and carried the rest back to his work.

Yet Wylie was a very sober man in a general way. Rum was his tool; not his master.

When Hazel came to think of it all next day, he did not feel quite so easy as he had done. The inner skin! But, when Wylie withdrew his auger, the water had squirted in furiously. He felt it hard to believe that this keen jet of water could be caused by a small quantity that had found its way between the skin of the ship and her copper, or her top booting; it seemed rather to be due to the direct pressure of the liquid monster outside.

He went to the captain that afternoon, and first told him what he had seen, offering no solution. The captain, on that occasion, was in an amphibious state; neither wet nor dry; and his reply was altogether exceptional. He received the communication with pompous civility; then swore a great oath, and said he would put the mate in irons: "Confound the lubber! he will be through the ship's bottom."

"But, stop a moment," said Mr. Hazel, "it is only fair you should also hear how he accounts for his proceeding."

The captain listened attentively to the explanation, and altered his tone. "O, that is a different matter," said he. "You need be under no alarm, sir; the thundering lubber knows what he is about, at that work. Why he has been a ship's carpenter all his life. Him a seaman! If anything ever happens to me, and Joe Wylie is set to navigate this ship, then you may say your prayers. He is n't fit to sail a wash-tub across a duck-pond. But I'll tell you what it is," added this worthy, with more pomposity than neatness of articulation, "here's respectable passenger brought me a report; do my duty to m'employers, and—take a look at the well."

He accordingly chalked a plumb-line, and went and sounded the well.

There were eight inches of water. Hudson told him that was no more than all ships contained from various causes; "in fact," said he, "our pumps

suck, and will not draw, at eight inches." Then suddenly grasping Mr. Hazel's hand, he said, in tearful accents, "Don't you trouble your head about Joe Wylie, or any such scum. I'm skipper of the Proserpine, and a man that does his duty to z'employers. Mr. Hazel, sir, I'd come to my last anchor in that well this moment, if my duty to m'employers required it. B— my eyes if I would n't lie down there this minute, and never move to all eternity and a day after, if it was my duty to m'employers!"

"No doubt," said Hazel, dryly. "But I think you can serve your employers better in other parts of the ship." He then left him, with a piece of advice; "to keep his eye upon that Wylie."

Mr. Hazel kept his own eye on Wylie so constantly, that at eleven o'clock P. M. he saw that worthy go into the captain's cabin with a quart bottle of rum.

The coast was clear; the temptation great.

These men then were still deceiving him with a feigned antagonism. He listened at the keyhole, not without some compunction; which, however, became less and less as fragments of the dialogue reached his ear.

For a long time the only speaker was Hudson, and his discourse ran upon his own exploits at sea. But suddenly Wylie's voice broke in with an unmistakable tone of superiority. "Belay all that chat, and listen to me. It is time we settled something. I'll hear what you have got to say; and then you'll do what I say. Better keep your hands off the bottle a minute; you have had enough for the present; this is business. I know you are good for jaw; but what are you game to do for the governor's money? Anything?"

"More than you have ever seen or heard tell of, ye lubber," replied the irritated skipper. "Who has ever served his employers like Hiram Hudson?"

"Keep that song for your quarter-deck," retorted the mate, contemptuously. "No; on second thoughts, just tell me how you have served your employers, you old humbug. Give me chapter and verse to choose from. Come now, the Neptune?"

"Well, the Neptune; she caught fire a hundred leagues from land."

"How came she to do that?"

"That is my business. Well, I put her head before the wind, and ran for the Azores; and I stuck to her, sir, till she was as black as a coal, and we could n't stand on deck, but kept hopping like parched peas; and fire belching out of her port-holes forward: then we took to the boats, and saved a few bales of silk by way of sample of her cargo, and got ashore; and she'd have come ashore too next tide and told tales, but Somebody left a keg of gunpowder in the cabin, with a long fuse, and blew a hole in her old ribs, that the water came in, and down she went, hissing like ten thousand serpents, and nobody the wiser."

"Who lighted the fuse, I wonder?" said Wylie.

"Did n't I tell ye it was 'Somebody'?" said Hudson. "Hand me the stiff." He replenished his glass, and, after taking a sip or two, asked Wylie if he had ever had the luck to be boarded by pirates.

"No," said Wylie. "Have you?"

"Ay; and they rescued me from a watery grave, as the lubbers call it. Ye see, I was employed by Downes and Co., down at the Havannah, and cleared for Vera Cruz with some boxes of old worn-out printers' type."

"To print psalm-books for the darkies, no doubt," suggested Wylie.

"Insured as specie," continued Hudson, ignoring the interruption. "Well, just at daybreak one morning, all of a sudden there was a rakish-looking craft on our weather-bow: lets fly a nine-pounder across our fore-foot, and was alongside before my men could tumble up from below. I got knocked into the sea by the boom and fell between the ships; and the pirate he got hold of me and poured hot grog down my throat to bring me to my senses."

"That is not what you use it for in general," said Wylie. "Civil sort of pirate, though."

"Pirate be d—d. That was my consort, rigged out with a black flag, and mounted with four nine-pounders on one side, and five dummies on the other. He blustered a bit, and swore, and took our type and our cabbages (I complained to Downes ashore about the vagabond taking the vegetables), and ordered us to leeward under all canvas, and we never saw him again,—not till he had shaved off his mustaches, and called on Downes to condole, and say the varmint had chased his ship fifty leagues out of her course; but he had got clear of him. Downes complimented me publicly. Says he, 'This skipper boarded the pirate single handed; only he jumped short, and fell between the two ships; and here he is by a miracle.' Then he takes out his handkerchief, and flops his head on my shoulder. 'His merciful preservation almost reconciles me to the loss of my gold,' says the thundering crocodile. Cleared \$70,000, he did, out of the Marhattan Marine, and gave the pirate and me but £200 between us both."

"The Rose?" said Wylie.

"What a hurry you are in! Pass the grog. Well the Rose; she lay off Ushant. We canted her to wash the decks; lucky she had a careful commander; not like Kempenfelt, whose eye was in his pocket, and his fingers held the pen, so he went to the bottom, with Lord knows how many men. I noticed the squalls came very sudden; so I sent most of my men ashore, and got the boats ready in case of accident. A squall did strike her, and she was on her beam-ends in a moment: we pulled ashore with two bales of silk by way of salvage, and sample of what warn't in her hold when she settled down. We landed; and the Frenchmen were dancing about with excitement. 'Captain,' says one, 'you have much sang fraw.' 'Insured, munseer,' says I. 'Bone,' says he."

"Then there was the Antelope, lost in charge of a pilot off the Hooghly. I knew the water as well as he did. We were on the port tack, standing towards the shoal. Weather it, as we should have done next tack, and I should have failed in my duty to my employers. Anything but that! 'Look out!' said I. 'Pilot, she forereaches in stays. Pilot was smoking: those Sandhead pilots smoke in bed and asleep. He takes his cigar out of his mouth for one moment. 'Ready about,' says he. 'Hands 'bout ship. Helms a-lee. Raise tacks and sheets.' Round she was coming like a top. Pilot smoking. Just as he was going to haul the mainsail Somebody tripped against him, and shoved the hot cigar in his eye. He sung out and swore, and there was no mainsail haul. Ship in irons, tide running hard on to the shoal, and before we could clear away for anchoring, bump!—there she was hard and fast. A stiff breeze got up at sunrise, and she broke up. Next day I was sipping my grog and reading the Bengal Courier, and it told the disastrous wreck

of the brig *Antelope*, wrecked in charge of a pilot; 'but no lives lost, and the owners fully insured.' Then there was the bark *Sally*. Why, you saw her yourself distressed, on a lee shore."

"Yes," said Wylie. "I was in that tub, the *Grampus*, and we contrived to claw off the *Scillies*; yet you, in your smart *Sally*, got ashore. What luck!"

"Luck be blowed!" cried Hudson, angrily. "Somebody got into the chains to sound; and cut the weather halyards. Next tack the masts went over the side; and I had done my duty."

"Lives were lost that time, eh?" said Wylie, gravely.

"What is that to you?" replied Hudson, with the sudden ire of a drunken man. "Mind your own business. Pass me the bottle."

"Yes, lives was lost: and always will be lost in sea-going ships, where the skipper does his duty. There was a sight more lost at *Trafalgar*, owing to every man doing his duty. Lives lost, ye lubber! And why not mine? Because their time was come and mine was n't. For I'll tell you one thing, Joe Wylie, — if she takes fire and runs before the wind till she is as black as a coal, and belching flame through all her portholes, and then explodes, and goes aloft in ten thousand pieces no bigger than my hat, or your knowledge of navigation, Hudson is the last man to leave her: Duty! — If she goes on her beam ends and founders, Hudson sees the last of her, and reports it to his employers: Duty! — If she goes grinding on *Scilly*, Hudson is the last man to leave her bones. Duty! — Some day perhaps I shall be swamped myself along with the craft: I have escaped till now, owing to *not being insured*: but if ever my time should come, and you should get clear, promise me, Joe, to see the owners, and tell 'em Hudson did his duty."

Here a few tears quenched his noble ardor for a moment. But he soon recovered, and said, with some little heat, "You have got the bottle again. I never saw such a fellow to get hold of the bottle. Come, here's 'Duty to our employers!' And now I'll tell you how we managed with the *Carysbrook*, and the *Amelia*."

This promise was followed by fresh narratives; in particular, of a vessel he had run upon the *Florida* reef at night, where wreckers had been retained in advance to look out for signals, and come on board and quarrel in pretence and set fire to the vessel, insured at thrice her value.

Hudson got quite excited with the memory of these exploits, and told each successive feat louder and louder.

But now it was Wylie's turn. "Well," said he, very gravely, "all this was child's play."

There was a pause that marked Hudson's astonishment. Then he broke out, "Child's play, ye lubber! If you had been there your gills would have been as white as your Sunday shirt; and a d—d deal whiter."

"Come, be civil," said Wylie, "I tell you, all the ways you have told me are too suspicious. Our governor is a high-flyer: he pays like a prince, and, in return, he must not be blown on, if it is ever so little. 'Wylie,' says he, 'a breath of suspicion would kill me.' 'Make it so much,' says I, 'and that breath shall never blow on you.' No, no, skipper; none of those ways will do for us; they have all been worked twice too often. It must be done in fair weather, and in a way — fill your glass

and I'll fill mine — Capital rum this. You talk of my gills turning white; before long, we shall see whose keeps their color best, mine or yours, my Boy."

There was a silence, during which Hudson was probably asking himself what Wylie meant; for presently, he broke out in a loud, but somewhat quivering voice, "Why, you mad, drunken devil of a ship's carpenter, red-hot from hell, I see what you are at, now; you are going —"

"Hush!" cried Wylie, alarmed in his turn. "Is this the sort of thing to bellow out for the watch to hear? Whisper, now."

This was followed by the earnest mutterings of two voices. In vain did the listener send his very soul into his ear to hear. He could catch no single word. Yet he could tell, by the very tones of the speakers, that the dialogue was one of mystery and importance.

Here was a situation at once irritating and alarming; but there was no help for it. The best thing, now, seemed to be to withdraw unobserved, and wait for another opportunity. He did so; and he had not long retired, when the mate came out staggering, and flushed with liquor, and that was a thing that had never occurred before. He left the cabin door open, and went into his own room.

Soon after, sounds issued from the cabin, peculiar sounds, something between grunting and snoring.

Mr. Hazel came and entered the cabin. There he found the captain of the *Proserpine* in a position very unfavorable to longevity. His legs were crooked over the seat of his chair, and his head was on the ground. His handkerchief was tight round his neck, and the man himself dead drunk, and purple in the face.

Mr. Hazel instantly undid his stock, on which the gallant seaman muttered inarticulately. He then took his feet off the chair, and laid them on the ground, and put the empty bottle under the animal's neck.

But he had no sooner done all this, than he had a serious misgiving. Would not this man's death have been a blessing? Might not his life prove fatal?

The thought infuriated him, and he gave the prostrate figure a heavy kick that almost turned it over, and the words, "Duty to employers," gurgled out of its mouth directly.

It really seemed as if these sounds were independent of the mind, and resided at the tip of Hudson's tongue: so that a thorough good kick could, at any time, shake them out of his inanimate body.

Thus do things ludicrous, and things terrible, mingle in the real world; only to those who are in the arena, the ludicrous passes unnoticed, being overshadowed by its terrible neighbor.

And so it was with Hazel. He saw nothing absurd in all this; and in that prostrate, insensible hog, commanding the ship, forsooth, and carrying all their lives in his hands: he saw the mysterious and alarming only, saw them so, and felt them, that he lay awake all night thinking what he should do, and early next day he went into the mate's cabin, and said to him, "Mr. Wylie, in any other ship I should speak to the captain, and not to the mate; but here that would be no use, for you are the master, and he is your servant."

"Don't tell him so, sir, for he does n't think small beer of himself."

"I shall waste no more words on him. It is to you speak, and you know I speak the truth. Here is a ship, in which, for certain reasons known to yourself, the captain is under the mate."

"Well, sir," said Wylie, good-humoredly, "it is no use trying to deceive a gentleman like you. Our skipper is an excellent seaman, but he has got a fault." Then Wylie imitated, with his hand, the action of a person filling his glass.

"And you are here to keep him sober, eh?"

Wylie nodded.

"Then why do you ply him with liquor?"

"I don't, sir."

"You do. I have seen you do it a dozen times: and last night you took rum into his room, and made him so drunk, he would have died where he lay if I had not loosed his handkerchief."

"I am sorry to hear that, sir; but he was sober when I left him. The fool must have got to the bottle the moment I was gone."

"But that bottle you put in his way; I saw you: and what was your object? to deaden his conscience with liquor, his and your own, while you made him your fiendish proposal. Man, man, do you believe in God, and in a judgment to come for the deeds done in the body, that you can plan in cold blood to destroy a vessel with nineteen souls on board, besides the live stock, the innocent animals that God pitied and spared, when he raised his hand in wrath over Nineveh of old?"

While the clergyman was speaking, with flashing eyes and commanding voice, the seaman turned ashy pale; and drew his shoulders together like a cat preparing to defend her life.

"I plan to destroy a vessel, sir! You never heard me say such a word; and don't you hint such a thing in the ship, or you will get yourself into trouble."

"That depends on you."

"How so, sir?"

"I have long suspected you."

"You need not tell me that, sir."

"But I have not communicated my suspicions. And now that they are certainties, I come first to you. In one word, will you forego your intention, since it is found out?"

"How can I forego what never was in my head?" said Wylie. "Cast away the ship! Why there's no land within two thousand miles. Founder a vessel in the Pacific! Do you think my life is not as sweet to me as yours is to you?"

Wylie eyed him keenly to see the effect of these words, and by a puzzled expression that came over his face, saw at once he had assumed a more exact knowledge than he really possessed.

Hazel replied that he had said nothing about foundering the ship; but there were many ways of destroying one. "For instance," said he, "I know how the Neptune was destroyed,—and so do you; how the Rose and the Antelope were cast away, and so do you."

At this enumeration, Wylie lost his color and self-possession for a moment; he saw Hazel had been listening. Hazel followed up his blow. "Promise me now, by all you hold sacred, to forego this villainy; and I hold my tongue. Attempt to defy me, or to throw dust in my eyes, and I go instantly among the crew, and denounce both you and Hudson to them."

"Good Heavens!" cried Wylie in unfeigned terror. "Why the men would mutiny on the spot."

"I can't help that," said Hazel, firmly; and took a step towards the door.

"Stop a bit," said the mate. "Don't be in such a nation hurry: for, if you do, it will be bad for me, but worse for you." The above was said so gravely, and with such evident sincerity, that Mr. Hazel was struck, and showed it. Wylie followed up that trifling advantage. "Sit down a minute, sir, if you please, and listen to me. You never saw a mutiny on board ship, I'll be bound. It is a worse thing than any gale that ever blew: begins fair enough, sometimes; but how does it end? In breaking into the spirit-room, and drinking to madness, plundering the ship, ravishing the women, and cutting a throat or so for certain. You don't seem so fond of the picture, as you was of the idea. And then they might turn a deaf ear to you after all. Ship is well found in all stores; provisions served out freely; men in good humor; and I have got their ear. And now I'll tell you why it won't suit your little game to blacken me to the crew, upon the bare chance of a mutiny." He paused for a moment, then resumed in a lower tone, and revealed himself the extraordinary man he was.

"You see, sir," said he, "when a man is very ready to suspect me, I always suspect him. Now you was uncommon ready to suspect me. You did n't wait till you came on board; you began the game ashore. Oh! what, that makes you open one eye, does it? You thought I did n't know you again. Knew you, my man, the moment you came aboard. I never forget a face; and disguises don't pass on me."

It was now Hazel's turn to look anxious and discomposd.

"So, then, the moment I saw you suspected me I was down upon you. Well, you come aboard under false colors. We did n't want a chap like you in the ship; but you would come. 'What is the bloke after?' says I, and watches. You was so intent suspecting me of this, that, and t'other, that you unguarded yourself, and that is common too. I'm blowed if it is n't the lady you are after. With all my heart: only she might do better, and I don't see how she could do worse, unless she went to old Nick for a mate. Now, I'll tell you what it is, my man. I've been in trouble myself, and don't want to be hard on a poor devil, just because he sails under an alias, and lies as near the wind as he can, to weather on the beaks and the bobbies. But one good turn deserves another: keep your dirty suspicions to yourself; for if you dare to open your lips to the men, in five minutes, or less than that, you shall be in irons, and confined to your cabin; and we'll put you ashore at the first port that flies a British flag, and hand you over to the authorities, till one of her Majesty's cruisers sends in a boat for you."

At this threat Mr. Hazel hung his head in confusion and dismay.

"Come, get out of my cabin, Parson Alias," shouted the mate; "and belay your foul tongue in this ship, and don't make an enemy of Joe Wylie, a man that will eat you up else, and spit you out again, and never brag. Sheer off, I say, and be d—d to you."

Mr. Hazel, with a pale face and sick heart, looked aghast at this dangerous man, who could be fox, or tiger, as the occasion demanded.

Surprised, alarmed, outwitted, and out-menaced, he retired with disordered countenance, and uneven steps, and hid himself in his own cabin.

The more he weighed the whole situation, the more clearly did he see that he was utterly powerless in the hands of Wylie.

A skipper is an emperor; and Hudson had the power to iron him, and set him on shore at the nearest port. The right to do it was another matter; but even on that head, Wylie could furnish a plausible excuse for the act. Retribution, if it came at all, would not be severe, and would be three or four years coming; and who fears it much, when it is so dilatory, and so weak, and so doubtful into the bargain?

He succumbed in silence for two days; and then, in spite of Wylie's threat, he made one timid attempt to approach the subject with Welch and Cooper, but a sailor came up instantly, and sent them forward to reef topsails. And whenever he tried to enter into conversation with the pair, some sailor or other was sure to come up and listen.

Then he saw that he was spotted; or, as we say nowadays, picketed.

He was at his wits' end.

He tried his last throw. He wrote a few lines to Miss Rolleston, requesting an interview. Aware of the difficulties he had to encounter here, he stilled his heart by main force, and wrote in terms carefully measured. He begged her to believe he had no design to intrude upon her, without absolute necessity, and for her own good. Respect for her own wishes forbade this, and also his self-respect.

"But," said he, "I have made a terrible discovery. The mate and the captain certainly intend to cast away this ship. No doubt they will try and not sacrifice their own lives and ours; but risk them they must, in the very nature of things. Before troubling you, I have tried all I could, in the way of persuasion and menace; but am defeated. So now it rests with you. You, alone, can save us all. I will tell you how, if you will restrain your repugnance, and accord me a short interview. Need I say that no other subject shall be introduced by me. In England, should we ever reach it, I may perhaps try to take measures to regain your good opinion; but here, I am aware, that is impossible; and I shall make no attempt in that direction upon my honor."

To this, came a prompt and feminine reply:—

"The ship is *his*. The captain and the mate are able men, appointed by *him*. Your suspicions of these poor men are calumnies, and of a piece with your other monstrous slanders.

"I really must insist on your holding no further communication of any sort with one, to whom your character is revealed and odious. H. R."

This letter benumbed his heart at first. A letter? It was a blow; a blow from her he loved, and she hated him!

His long-suffering love gave way at last. What folly and cruelty combined! He could no longer make allowances for the spite of a woman whose lover had been traduced. Rage and despair seized him; he bit his nails, and tore his hair with fury; and prayed Heaven to help him hate her as she deserved, "the blind, insolent idiot!" Yes, these bitter words actually came out of his mouth, in a torrent of fury.

But, to note down all he said, in his rage, would be useless; and might mislead, for this was a gust of fury; and, while it lasted, the long-suffering man was no longer himself.

As a proof how little this state of mind was natu-

ral to him, it stirred up all the bile in his body, and brought on a severe attack of yellow jaundice, accompanied by the settled dejection that marks that disorder.

Meantime the Proserpine glided on, with a fair wind, and a contented crew. She was well found in stores; and they were served out ungrudgingly.

Every face on board beamed with jollity, except poor Hazel's. He crept about, yellow as a guinea; a very scarecrow.

The surgeon, a humane man, urged him to drink sherry, and take strong exercise.

But persons afflicted with that distressing malady, are obstinately set against those things which tend to cure it; this is a feature of the disease. Mr. Hazel was no exception. And then his heart had received so many blows, it had no power left to resist the depressing effect of his disorder. He took no exercise; he ate little food. He lay, listless and dejected, about the deck, and let disease do what it pleased with him.

The surgeon shook his head, and told Hudson the parson was booked.

"And good riddance of bad rubbish!" was that worthy's gracious comment.

The ship now encountered an adverse gale, and, for three whole days, was under close-reefed topsails; she was always a wet ship under stress of weather; and she took in a good deal of water on this occasion. On the fourth day it fell calm, and Captain Hudson, having examined the well, and found three feet of water, ordered the men to the pumps.

After working through one watch, the well was sounded again, and the water was so much reduced that the gangs were taken off; and the ship being now becalmed, and the weather lovely, the men were allowed to dance upon deck to the boat-swain's fiddle.

While this pastime went on, the sun, large and red, reached the horizon, and diffused a roseate light over the entire ocean.

Not one of the current descriptions of heaven approached the actual grandeur and beauty of the blue sky flecked with ruby and gold, and its liquid mirror that lay below, calm, dimpled, and glorified by that translucent, rosy tint.

While the eye was yet charmed with this enchanting bridal of the sea and sky, and the ear amused with the merry fiddle and the nimble feet, that tapped the sounding deck so deftly at every note, Cooper, who had been sounding the well, ran forward all of a sudden, and flung a thunderbolt in the midst.

"A LEAK!"

CHAPTER X.

THE fiddle ended in mid-tune, and the men crowded aft with anxious faces.

The captain sounded the well, and found three feet and a half water in it. He ordered all hands to the pumps.

They turned to with a good heart, and pumped, watch and watch, till daybreak.

Their exertions counteracted the leak, but did no more; the water in the well was neither more nor less perceptibly.

This was a relief to their minds, so far; but the situation was a very serious one. Suppose foul

weather should come, and the vessel ship water from above as well!

Now, all those who were not on the pumps, set to work to find out the leak and stop it if possible. With candles in their hands, they crept about the ribs of the ship, narrowly inspecting every corner, and applying their ears to every suspected place, if haply they might hear the water coming in. The place where Hazel had found Wylie at work was examined, along with the rest; but neither there nor anywhere else could the leak be discovered. Yet the water was still coming in, and required unremitting labor to keep it under. It was then suggested by Wylie, and the opinion gradually gained ground, that some of the seams had opened in the late gale, and were letting in the water by small but numerous apertures.

Faces began to look cloudy; and Hazel, throwing off his lethargy, took his spell at the main pump with the rest.

When his gang was relieved he went away, bathed in perspiration, and, leaning over the well, sounded it.

While thus employed, the mate came behind him, with his cat-like step, and said, "See what has come on us with your forebodings! It is the unluckiest thing in the world to talk about losing a ship when she is at sea."

"You are a more dangerous man on board a ship than I am," was Hazel's prompt reply.

The well gave an increase of three inches.

Mr. Hazel now showed excellent qualities. He worked like a horse; and, finding the mate skulking, he reproached him before the men, and, stripping himself naked to the waist, invited him to do a man's duty. The mate, thus challenged, complied with a scowl.

They labored for their lives, and the quantity of water they discharged from the ship was astonishing; not less than a hundred and ten tons every hour.

They gained upon the leak—only two inches; but, in the struggle for life, this was an immense victory. It was the turn of the tide.

A slight breeze sprung up from the southwest, and the captain ordered the men from the buckets to make all sail on the ship, the pumps still going.

When this was done, he altered the ship's course, and put her right before the wind, steering for the island of Juan Fernandez, distant eleven hundred miles, or thereabouts.

Probably it was the best thing he could do, in that awful waste of water. But its effect on the seamen was bad. It was like giving in. They got a little disheartened and flurried; and the cold, passionless water seized the advantage. It is possible, too, that the motion of the ship through the sea, aided the leak.

"The Proserpine glided through the water all night, like some terror-stricken creature, and the incessant pumps seemed to be her poor heart, beating loud with breathless fear.

At daybreak she had gone a hundred and twenty miles. But this was balanced by a new and alarming feature. The water from the pumps no longer came up pure, but mixed with what appeared to be blood.

This got redder and redder, and struck terror into the more superstitious of the crew.

Even Cooper, whose heart was stout, leaned over the bulwarks, and eyed the red stream, gushing into the sea from the lee scuppers, and said aloud, "Ay,

bleed to death, ye bitch! We sha'n't be long behind ye."

Hazel inquired, and found the ship had a quantity of dye-wood amongst her cargo; he told the men this, and tried to keep up their hearts by his words and his example.

He succeeded with some; but others shook their heads. And by and by, even while he was working double tides for them as well as for himself, ominous murmurs met his ear. "Parson aboard!" "Man aboard, with t'other world in his face!" And there were sinister glances to match.

He told this with some alarm, to Welch and Cooper. They promised to stand by him; and Welch told him it was all the mate's doing; he had gone amongst the men, and poisoned them.

The wounded vessel, with her ever-beating heart, had run three hundred miles on the new tack. She had almost ceased to bleed; but what was as bail, or worse, small fragments of her cargo and stores came up with the water, and their miscellaneous character showed how deeply the sea had now penetrated.

This, and their great fatigue, began to demoralize the sailors. The pumps and buckets were still plied, but it was no longer with the uniform manner of brave and hopeful men. Some stuck doggedly to their work, but others got flurried, and ran from one thing to another. Now and then a man would stop, and burst out crying; then to work again in a desperate way. One or two lost heart altogether, and had to be driven. Finally, one or two succumbed under the unremitting labor. Despair crept over others: their features began to change, so much so, that several countenances were hardly recognizable, and each, looking in the other's troubled face, saw his own fate pictured there.

Six feet water in the hold!

The captain, who had been sober beyond his time, now got dead drunk.

The mate took the command. On hearing this, Welch and Cooper left the pumps. Wylie ordered them back. They refused, and coolly lighted their pipes. A violent altercation took place, which was brought to a close by Welch.

"It is no use pumping the ship," said he. "She is doomed. D'y'e think we are blind, my mate and me? You got the long-boat ready for yourself before ever the leak was sprung. Now get the cutter ready for my mate and me."

At these simple words Wylie lost color, and walked aft without a word.

Next day there were seven feet water in the hold, and quantities of bread coming up through the pumps.

Wylie ordered the men from the pumps to the boats. The jolly-boat was provisioned and lowered. While she was towing astern, the cutter was prepared, and the ship left to fill.

All this time Miss Rolleston had been kept in the dark, not as to the danger, but as to its extent. Great was her surprise when Mr. Hazel entered her cabin, and cast an ineffable look of pity on her.

She looked up surprised and then angry. "How dare you?" she began.

He waved his hand in a sorrowful but commanding way. "O, this is no time for prejudice or temper. The ship is sinking: we are going into the boats. Pray make your preparations. Here is a list I have written of the things you ought to take: we may be weeks at sea in an open boat."

Then, seeing her dumbfounded, he caught up her carpet-bag, and threw her work-box into it for a beginning. He then laid hands upon some of her preserved meats, and marmalade, and carried them off to his own cabin.

His mind then flew back to his reading, and passed in rapid review, all the wants that men had endured in open boats.

He got hold of Welch, and told him to be sure and see there was plenty of spare canvas on board, and sailing needles, scissors, etc. : also three bags of biscuit, and, above all, a cask of water.

He himself ran all about the ship, including the mate's cabin, in search of certain tools he thought would be wanted.

Then to his own cabin, to fill his carpet-bag.

There was little time to spare ; the ship was low in the water, and the men abandoning her. He flung the things into his bag, fastened and locked it, strapped up his blankets for her use, flung on his pea-jacket, and turned the handle of his door to run out.

The door did not open !

He pushed it. It did not yield !

He rushed at it. It was fast !

He uttered a cry of rage, and flung himself at it. Horror ! It was immovable.

CHAPTER XI.

THE fearful, the sickening truth burst on him in all its awful significance.

Some miscreant or madman had locked the door, and so fastened him to the sinking ship, at a time when, in the bustle, the alarm, the selfishness, all would be apt to forget him, and leave him to his death.

He tried the door in every way, he hammered at it ; he shouted, he raged, he screamed. In vain. Unfortunately the door of this cabin was of very unusual strength and thickness.

Then he took up one of those great augers he had found in the mate's cabin, and bored a hole in the door ; through this hole he fired his pistol, and then screamed for help. " I am shut up in the cabin. I shall be drowned. O, for Christ's sake, save me ! save me ! " and a cold sweat of terror poured down his whole body.

What is that ?

The soft rustle of a woman's dress.

O, how he thanked God for that music, and the hope it gave him !

It comes towards him ; it stops, the key is turned, the dress rustles away, swift as a winged bird ; he dashes at the door ; it flies open.

Nobody was near. He recovered his courage in part, fetched out his bag and his tools, and ran across to the starboard side. There he found the captain lowering Miss Rolleston, with due care, into the cutter, and the young lady crying ; not at being shipwrecked, if you please, but at being deserted by her maid. Jane Holt, at this trying moment, had deserted her mistress for her husband. This was natural ; but, as is the rule with persons of that class, she had done this in the silliest and cruelest way. Had she given half an hour's notice of her intention, Donovan might have been on board the cutter with her and her mistress. But no ; being a liar and a fool, she must hide her husband to the last moment, and then desert her mistress. The captain, then, was comforting Miss

Rolleston, and telling her she should have her maid with her eventually, when Hazel came ; he handed down his own bag, and threw the blankets into the stern-sheets. Then went down himself, and sat on the midship-thwart.

" Shove off," said the captain ; and they fell astern.

But Cooper, with a boat-hook, hooked on to the long-boat ; and the dying ship towed them both.

Five minutes more elapsed, and the captain did not come down, so Wylie hailed him.

There was no answer. Hudson had gone into the mate's cabin. Wylie waited a minute, then hailed again. " Hy ! on deck there ! "

" Hullo ! " cried the captain, at last.

" Why did n't you come in the cutter ? "

The captain crossed his arms, and leaned over the stern.

" Don't you know that Hiram Hudson is always the last to leave a sinking ship ? "

" Well, you *are* the last," said Wylie. " So now come on board the long-boat at once. I dare not tow in her wake much longer, to be sucked in when she goes down. "

" Come on board your craft and desert my own ? " said Hudson, disdainfully. " Know my duty to m'employers better. "

These words alarmed the mate. " Curse it all ! " he cried ; " the fool has been and got some more rum. Fifty guineas to the man that will shin up the tow-rope, and throw that madman into the sea, then we can pick him up. He swims like a cork. "

A sailor instantly darted forward to the rope. But, unfortunately, Hudson heard this proposal, and it enraged him. He got to his cutlass. The sailor drew the boat under the ship's stern, but the drunken skipper flourished his cutlass furiously over his head. " Board me / ye pirates ! the first that lays a finger on my bulwarks, off goes his hand at the wrist. " Suiting the action to the word, he hacked at the tow-rope so vigorously that it gave way, and the boats fell astern.

Helen Rolleston uttered a shriek of dismay and pity. " O, save him ! " she cried.

" Make sail ! " cried Cooper ; and, in a few seconds, they got all her canvas set upon the cutter.

It seemed a hopeless chase for these shells to sail after that dying monster with her cloud of canvas all drawing, aloof and aloft.

" But it did not prove so. The gentle breeze was an advantage to light craft, and the dying Proserpine was full of water, and could only crawl.

After a few moments of great anxiety, the boats crept up, the cutter on her port, and the long-boat on her starboard-quarter.

Wylie ran forward, and, hailing Hudson, implored him, in the friendliest tones, to give himself a chance. Then tried him by his vanity, " Come, and command the boats, old fellow. How can we navigate them on the Pacific, without you ? "

Hudson was now leaning over the taffrail utterly drunk. He made no reply to the mate, but merely waived his cutlass feebly in one hand, and his bottle in the other, and gurgled out " Duty to m'employers. "

Then Cooper, without a word, double-reefed the cutter's mainsail, and told Welch to keep as close to the ship's quarter as he dare. Wylie instinctively did the same, and the three craft crawled on, in solemn and deadly silence, for nearly twenty minutes.

The wounded ship seemed to receive a death-blow. She stopped dead, and shook.

The next moment she pitched gently forward, and her bows went under the water, while her after-part rose into the air, and revealed to those in the cutter two splintered holes in her run, just below the water-line.

The next moment her stern settled down; the sea yawned horribly, the great waves of her own making rushed over her upper deck, and the lofty masts and sails, remaining erect, went down with sad majesty into the deep: and nothing remained but the bubbling and foaming of the voracious water, that had swallowed up the good ship and her cargo, and her drunken master.

All stood up in the boats, ready to save him. But either his cutlass sunk him, or the suction of so great a body drew him down. He was seen no more in this world.

A loud sigh broke from every living bosom that witnessed that terrible catastrophe.

It was beyond words: and none were uttered, except by Cooper, who spoke so seldom; yet now three words of terrible import burst from him, and, uttered in his loud, deep voice, rang like the sunk ship's knell over the still bubbling water, —

“SCUTTLED, — BY GOD!”

CHAPTER XII.

“HOLD your tongue,” said Welch, with an oath.

Mr. Hazel looked at Miss Rolleston, and she at him. It was a momentary glance, and her eyes sank directly, and filled with patient tears.

For the first few minutes after the Proserpine went down, the survivors sat benumbed, as if awaiting their turn to be engulfed.

They seemed so little, and the Proserpine so big; yet she was swallowed before their eyes, like a crumb. They lost, for a few moments, all idea of escaping.

But, true it is, that, “while there’s life there’s hope”: and, as soon as their hearts began to beat again, their eyes roved round the horizon, and their elastic minds recoiled against despair.

This was rendered easier, by the wonderful beauty of the weather. There were men there, who had got down from a sinking ship, into boats heaving and tossing against her side in a gale of wind, and yet been saved: and here all was calm and delightful. To be sure, in those other shipwrecks, land had been near, and their greatest peril was over, when once the boats got clear of the distressed ship without capsizing. Here was no immediate peril, but certain death menaced them, at an uncertain distance.

Their situation was briefly this. Should it come on to blow a gale, these open boats, small and loaded, could not hope to live. Therefore they had two chances for life, and no more: they must either make land, — or be picked up at sea, — before the weather changed.

But how? The nearest known land was the group of islands called Juan Fernandez, and they lay somewhere to leeward; but distant, at least, nine hundred miles: and, should they prefer the other chance, then they must beat three hundred miles, and more to windward; for Hudson under-ating the leak, as is supposed, had run the Proserpine fully that distance out of the track of trade.

Now the ocean is a highway — in law: but, in

fact, it contains a few highways, and millions of by-ways; and, once a cockle-shell gets into those by-ways, small indeed is its chance of being seen and picked up by any sea-going vessel.

Wylie, who was leading, lowered his sail, and hesitated between the two courses we have indicated. However, on the cutter coming up with him, he ordered Cooper to keep her head north-east, and so run all night. He then made all the sail he could, in the same direction, and soon out-sailed the cutter. When the sun went down, he was about a mile ahead of her.

Just before sunset, Mr. Hazel made a discovery that annoyed him very much. He found that Welch had put only one bag of biscuit, a ham, a keg of spirit, and a small barrel of water, on board the cutter.

He remonstrated with him sharply. Welch replied that it was all right; the cutter being small, he had put the rest of her provisions on board the long-boat.

“On board the long-boat!” said Hazel, with a look of wonder. “You have actually made our lives depend upon that scoundrel Wylie again. You deserve to be flung into the sea. You have no forethought yourself: yet you will not be guided by those that have it.”

Welch hung his head a little at these reproaches. However, he replied, rather sullenly, that it was only for one night; they could signal the long-boat in the morning, and get the other bags, and the cask, out of her. But Mr. Hazel was not to be appeased. “The morning! Why, she sails three feet to our two. How do you know he won’t run away from us? I never expect to get within ten miles of him again. We know him; and he knows we know him.”

Cooper got up, and patted Mr. Hazel on the shoulder, soothingly. “Boat-hook aft,” said he to Welch.

He then, by an ingenious use of the boat-hook, and some of the spare canvas, contrived to set out a studding-sail on the other side of the mast.

Hazel thanked him warmly. “But, O Cooper! Cooper!” said he, “I’d give all I have in the world if that bread and water were on board the cutter instead of the long-boat.”

The cutter had now two wings, instead of one; the water bubbling loud under her bows marked her increased speed; and all fear of being greatly out-sailed by her consort began to subside.

A slight sea-fret came on, and obscured the sea in part; but they had a good lantern and compass, and steered the course exactly, all night, according to Wylie’s orders, changing the helmsman every four hours.

Mr. Hazel, without a word, put a rug round Miss Rolleston’s shoulders, and another round her feet.

“O, not both, sir, please,” said she.

“Am I to be disobeyed by everybody?” said he.

Then she submitted in silence, and in a certain obsequious way that was quite new, and well calculated to disarm anger.

Sooner or later, all slept, except the helmsman.

At daybreak, Mr. Hazel was awakened by a loud hail from a man in the bows.

All the sleepers started up.

“Long-boat not in sight!”

It was too true. The ocean was blank: not a sail, large or small, in sight.

Many voices spoke at once.

"He was carried on till he has capsized her."

"He has given us the slip."

Unwilling to believe so great a calamity, every eye peered and stared all over the sea. In vain. Not a streak that could be a boat's hull, not a speck that could be a sail.

The little cutter was alone upon the ocean. Alone, with scarcely two days' provisions, nine hundred miles from land, and four hundred miles to leeward of the nearest sea-road.

Hazel, seeing his worst forebodings realized, sat down in moody, bitter, and boding silence.

Of the other men some raged and cursed. Some wept aloud.

The lady, more patient, put her hands together, and prayed to Him who made the sea and all that therein is. Yet her case was the cruelest. For she was by nature more timid than the men, yet she must share their desperate peril. And then to be alone with all these men, and one of them had told her he loved her, and hated the man she was betrothed to! Shame tortured this delicate creature, as well as fear. Happy for her, that of late, and only of late, she had learned to pray in earnest. "*Qui precari novit, premi potest, non potest opprimi.*"

It was now a race between starvation and drowning, and either way death stared them in the face.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE long-boat was, at this moment, a hundred miles to windward of the cutter.

The fact is, that Wylie, the evening before, had been secretly perplexed as to the best course. He had decided to run for the island; but he was not easy under his own decision; and, at night, he got more and more discontented with it. Finally, at nine o'clock, P. M. he suddenly gave the order to *loft*, and tack: and by daybreak he was very near the place where the *Proserpine* went down: whereas the cutter, having run before the wind all night was, at least, a hundred miles to leeward of him.

Not to deceive the reader, or let him, for a moment, think we do business in monsters, we will weigh this act of Wylie's justly.

It was just a piece of iron egotism. He preferred, for himself, the chance of being picked up by a vessel. He thought it was about a hair's breadth better than running for an island, as to whose bearing he was not very clear, after all.

But he was not *sure* he was taking the best or safest course. The cutter might be saved, after all, and the long-boat lost.

Meantime he was not sorry of an excuse to shake off the cutter. She contained one man at least who knew he had scuttled the *Proserpine*; and therefore it was all-important to him to get to London before her, and receive the three thousand pounds, which was to be his reward for that abominable act.

But the way to get to London before Mr. Hazel, or else to the bottom of the Pacific before him, was to get back into the sea-road, at all hazards.

He was not aware that the cutter's water and biscuit were on board his boat; nor did he discover this till noon next day. And, on making this fearful discovery, he showed himself human: he cried out, with an oath, "What have I done? I have damned myself to all eternity!"

He then ordered the boat to be put before the wind again; but the men scowled, and not one stirred a finger; and he saw the futility of this, and did not persist: but groaned aloud: and then sat, staring wildly: finally, like a true sailor, he got to the rum, and stupefied his agitated conscience for a time.

While he lay drunk, at the bottom of the boat, his sailors carried out his last instructions, beating southward right in the wind's eye.

Five days they beat to windward, and never saw a sail. Then it fell dead calm; and so remained for three days more.

The men began to suffer greatly from cramps, owing to their number and confined position. During the calm, they rowed all day, and with this, and a light westerly breeze that sprang up, they got into the sea-road again: but having now sailed three hundred and fifty miles to the southward, they found a great change in the temperature: the nights were so cold they were fain to huddle together, to keep a little warmth in their bodies.

On the fifteenth day of their voyage it began to rain and blow, and then they were never a whole minute out of peril. Hand forever on the sheet, eye on the waves, to ease her at the right moment: and, with all this care, the spray eternally flying half way over her mast, and often a body of water making a clean breach over her, and the men bailing night and day with their very hats, or she could not have lived an hour.

At last, when they were almost dead with wet, cold, fatigue, and danger, a vessel came in sight, and crept slowly up, about two miles to windward of the distressed boat. With the heave of the waters they could see little more than her sails; but they ran up a bright bandana handkerchief to their mast-head; and the ship made them out. She hoisted Dutch colors, and — continued her course.

Then the poor abandoned creatures wept, and raved, and cursed, in their frenzy, glaring after that cruel, shameless man, who could do such an act, yet hoist a color, and show of what nation he was the native — and the disgrace.

But one of them said not a word. This was Wylie. He sat shivering, and remembered how he had abandoned the cutter, and all on board. Loud sighs broke from his laboring breast; but not a word. Yet one word was ever present to his mind; and seemed written in fire on the night of clouds, and howled in his ears by the wind — Retribution!

And now came a dirty night — to men on ships; a fearful night to men in boats. The sky black, the sea on fire with crested billows, that broke over them every minute; their light was washed out; their provisions drenched and spoiled: bail as they would, the boat was always filling. Up to their knees in water; cold as ice, blinded with spray, deafened with roaring billows, they tossed and tumbled in a fiery foaming hell of waters, and still, though despairing, clung to their lives, and bailed with their hats unceasingly.

Day broke, and the first sight it revealed to them was a brig to windward staggering along, and pitching under close-reefed topsails.

They started up, and waved their hats, and cried aloud. But the wind carried their voices to leeward, and the brig staggered on.

They ran up their little signal of distress; but still the ship staggered on.

Then the miserable men shook hands all round, and gave themselves up for lost.

But, at this moment, the brig hoisted a vivid flag all stripes and stars, and altered her course a point or two.

She crossed the boat's track a mile ahead, and her people looked over the bulwarks, and waved their hats to encourage those tossed and desperate men.

Having thus given them the weather-gage the brig hove-to for them.

They ran down to her, and crept under her lee; down came ropes to them, held by friendly hands, and friendly faces shone down at them: eager grasps seized each as he went up the ship's side, and so, in a very short time, they sent the woman up, and the rest being all sailors, and clever as cats, they were safe on board the whaling brig Maria, Captain Slocum, of Nantucket, U. S.

Their log, compass, and instruments were also saved.

The boat was cast adrift, and was soon after seen bottom upwards on the crest of a wave.

The good Samaritan in command of the Maria supplied them with dry clothes out of the ship's stores, good food, and medical attendance, which was much needed, their legs and feet being in a deplorable condition, and their own surgeon crippled.

A southeasterly gale induced the American skipper to give Cape Horn a wide berth, and the Maria soon found herself three degrees south of that perilous coast. There she encountered field-ice. In this labyrinth they dodged and worried for eighteen days, until a sudden chop in the wind gave the captain a chance, of which he promptly availed himself; and in forty hours they sighted Terra del Fuego.

During this time, the rescued crew having recovered from the effects of their hardships, fell in to the work of the ship, and took their turns with the Yankee seamen. The brig was short-handed; but now trimmed and handled by a full crew and the Proserpine's men, who were first-class seamen, and worked with a will, because work was no longer a duty, she exhibited a speed the captain had almost forgotten was in the craft. Now speed at sea means economy, for every day added to a voyage is so much off the profits. Slocum was part owner of the vessel, and shrewdly alive to the value of the seamen. When about three hundred miles south of Buenos Ayres, Wylie proposed that they should be larded there, from whence they might be transhipped to a vessel bound for home.

This was objected to by Slocum, on the ground that, by such a deviation from his course, he must lose three days, and the port-dues at Buenos Ayres were heavy.

Wylie undertook that the house of Wardlaw and Son should indemnify the brig for all expenses and losses incurred.

Still the American hesitated; at last he honestly told Wylie he wished to keep the men; he liked them, they liked him. He had sounded them, and they had no objection to join his ship, and sign articles for a three years' whaling voyage, provided they did not thereby forfeit the wages to which they would be entitled on reaching Liverpool. Wylie went forward and asked the men if they would take service with the Yankee captain. All but three expressed their desire to do so; these three had families in England, and refused. The mate gave the others a release, and an order on Wardlaw and Co. for their full wages for the voyage; then they signed

articles with Captain Slocum, and entered the American Mercantile Navy.

Two days after this they sighted the high lands at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata at 10 p. m., and lay-to for a pilot. After three hours' delay they were boarded by a pilot-boat, and then began to creep into the port. The night was very dark, and a thin white fog lay on the water.

Wylie was sitting on the taffrail, and conversing with Slocum, when the look-out forward sung out, "Sail ho!"

Another voice almost simultaneously yelled out of the fog, "Port your helm!"

Suddenly out of the mist, and close aboard the Maria, appeared the hull and canvas of a large ship. The brig was crossing her course, and her great bowsprit barely missed the brig's mainsail. It stood for a moment over Wylie's head. He looked up, and there was the figure-head of the ship looming almost within his reach. It was a colossal green woman; one arm extended grasped a golden harp, the other was pressed to her head in the attitude of holding back her wild and flowing hair. The face seemed to glare down upon the two men: in another moment the monster, gliding on, just missing the brig, was lost in the fog.

"That was a narrow squeak," said Slocum.

Wylie made no answer, but looked into the darkness after the vessel.

He had recognized her figure-head.

It was the Shannon!

CHAPTER XIV.

BEFORE the Maria sailed again, with the men who formed a part of Wylie's crew, he made them sign a declaration before the English Consul at Buenos Ayres. This document set forth the manner in which the Proserpine foundered; it was artfully made up of facts enough to deceive a careless listener; but, when Wylie read it over to them, he slurred over certain parts, which he took care, also, to express in language above the comprehension of such men. Of course, they assented eagerly to what they did not understand, and signed the statement conscientiously.

So Wylie and his three men were shipped on board the Boadicea, bound for Liverpool, in Old England, while the others sailed with Captain Slocum for Nantucket, in New England.

The Boadicea was a clipper laden with hides, and a miscellaneous cargo. For seventeen days she flew before a southerly gale, being on her best sailing point, and after one of the shortest passages she had ever made, she lay-to outside the bar, off the Mersey. It wanted but one hour to daylight, the tide was flowing; the pilot sprang aboard.

"What do you draw?" he asked of the master.

"Fifteen feet, barely," was the reply.

"That will do," and the vessel's head was laid for the river.

They passed a large bark, with her top-sails backed.

"Ay," remarked the pilot, "she has waited since the half-ebb; there ain't more than four hours in the twenty-four that such craft as that can get in."

"What is she? An American liner?" asked Wylie, peering through the gloom.

"No," said the pilot; "she's an Australian ship. She's the Shannon, from Sydney."

The mate started, looked at the man, then at the

vessel. Twice the Shannon had thus met him, as if to satisfy him that his object had been attained, and each time she seemed to him not an inanimate thing, but a silent accomplice. A chill of fear struck through the man's frame as he looked at her. Yes, there she lay, and in her hold were safely stowed £160,000 in gold, marked lead and copper.

Wylie had no luggage nor effects to detain him on board; he landed, and having bestowed his three companions in a sailors' boarding-house, he was hastening to the shipping agents of Wardlaw and Son to announce his arrival and the fate of the *Proserpine*. He had reached their offices in Water Street before he recollected that it was barely half past five o'clock, and, though broad daylight on that July morning, merchants' offices are not open at that hour. The sight of the Shannon had so bewildered him that he had not noticed that the shops were all shut, the streets deserted. Then a thought occurred to him, — why not be a bearer of his own news? He did not require to turn the idea twice over, but resolved, for many reasons, to adopt it. As he hurried to the railway-station, he tried to recollect the hour at which the early train started; but his confused and excited mind refused to perform the function of memory. The Shannon dazed him.

At the railway-station he found that a train had started at 4 A. M., and there was nothing until 7.30. This check sobered him a little, and he went back to the docks; he walked out to the farther end of that noble line of berths, and sat down on the verge with his legs dangling over the water. He waited an hour; it was six o'clock by the great dial at St. George's Dock. His eyes were fixed on the Shannon, which was moving slowly up the river; she came abreast to where he sat. The few sails requisite to give her steerage fell. Her anchor-chain rattled, and she swung round with the tide. The clock struck the half hour; a boat left the side of the vessel and made straight for the steps near where he was seated. A tall, noble-looking man sat in the stern-sheets beside the coxswain; he was put ashore, and, after exchanging a few words with the boat's crew, he mounted the steps which led him to Wylie's side, followed by one of the sailors, who carried a portmanteau.

He stood for a single moment on the quay, and stamped his foot on the broad stones; then heaving a deep sigh of satisfaction, he murmured, "Thank God!"

He turned towards Wylie.

"Can you tell me, my man, at what hour the first train starts for London?"

"There is a slow train at 7.30 and an express at 9."

"The express will serve me, and give me time for breakfast at the Adelphi. Thank you; good morning!" and the gentleman passed on, followed by the sailor.

Wylie looked after him; he noted that erect military carriage and crisp, gray hair and thick white mustache; he had a vague idea that he had seen that face before, and the memory troubled him.

At 7.30 Wylie started for London; the military man followed him in the express at 9, and caught him up at Rugby; together they arrived at the station at Euston Square; it was a quarter to three. Wylie hailed a cab, but before he could struggle through the crowd to reach it a railway porter

threw a portmanteau on its roof, and his military acquaintance took possession of it.

"All right," said the porter. "What address, sir?"

Wylie did not hear what the gentleman said, but the porter shouted it to the cabman, and then he did hear it.

"No. —, Russell Square."

It was the house of Arthur Wardlaw!

Wylie took off his hat, rubbed his frowsy hair, and gaped after the cab.

He entered another cab, and told the driver to go to "No. —, Fenchurch Street."

It was the office of Wardlaw and Son.

CHAPTER XV.

OUR scene now changes from the wild ocean and its perils, to a snug room in Fenchurch Street; the inner office of Wardlaw and Son: a large apartment, panelled with fine old mellow Spanish oak; and all the furniture in keeping; the carpet, a thick Axminster of sober colors; the chairs, of oak and morocco, very substantial; a large office-table, with oaken legs like very columns, substantial; two Milner safes; a globe of unusual size, with a handsome tent over it, made of roan leather, figured; the walls hung with long oak boxes, about eight inches broad, containing rolled maps of high quality, and great dimensions; to consult which, oaken sceptres tipped with brass hooks stood ready: with these, the great maps could be drawn down and inspected; and, on being released, flew up into their wooden boxes again. Besides these were hung up a few drawings, representing outlines, and inner sections, of vessels: and, on a smaller table, lay models, almanacs, etc. The great office-table was covered with writing materials and papers, all but a square space enclosed with a little silver rail, and inside that space lay a purple morocco case about ten inches square; it was locked, and contained an exquisite portrait of Helen Rolleston.

This apartment was so situated, and the frames of the plate glass windows so well made and substantial, that, let a storm blow a thousand ships ashore, it could not be felt, nor heard, in Wardlaw's inner office.

But appearances are deceitful; and who can wall out a sea of troubles, and the tempests of the mind?

The inmate of that office was battling for his commercial existence, under accumulated difficulties and dangers. Like those who sailed the *Proserpine's* long-boat, upon that dirty night, which so nearly swamped her, his eye had now to be on every wave, and the sheet forever in his hand.

His measures had been ably taken; but, as will happen when clever men are driven into a corner, he had backed events rather too freely against time; had allowed too slight a margin for unforeseen delays. For instance, he had averaged the Shannon's previous performances, and had calculated on her arrival too nicely. She was a fortnight overdue, and that delay brought peril.

He had also counted upon getting news of the *Proserpine*. But not a word had reached Lloyd's as yet.

At this very crisis came the panic of '66. Overend and Gurney broke; and Wardlaw's experience led him to fear that, sooner or later, there would be a run on every bank in London. Now he had been

rowed £80,000 at one bank, and £35,000 at another: and, without his ships, could not possibly pay a quarter of the money. If the banks in question were run upon, and obliged to call in all their resources, his credit must go; and this, in his precarious position, was ruin.

He had concealed his whole condition from his father, by false book-keeping. Indeed, he had only two confidants in the world; poor old Michael Penfold, and Helen Rolleston's portrait; and even to these two he made half confidences. He dared not tell either of them all he had done, and all he was going to do.

His redeeming feature was as bright as ever. He still loved Helen Rolleston with a chaste, constant, and ardent affection that did him honor. He loved money too well: but he loved Helen better. In all his troubles and worries, it was his one consolation, to unlock her portrait, and gaze on it, and purify his soul for a few minutes. Sometimes he would apologize to it, for an act of doubtful morality. "How can I risk the loss of you?" was his favorite excuse. No: he must have credit. He must have money. She must not suffer by his past imprudences. They must be repaired, at any cost — for her sake.

It was ten o'clock in the morning: Mr. Penfold was sorting the letters for his employer, when a buxom young woman rushed into the outer office, crying "O Mr. Penfold!" and sank into a chair, breathless.

"Dear heart! what is the matter now?" said the old gentleman.

"I have had a dream, sir: I dreamed I saw Joe Wylie out on the seas, in a boat; and the wind it was a blowing and the sea a roaring to that degree as Joe looked at me, and says he, 'Pray for me, Nancy Rouse.'" "So I says, 'O dear, Joe, what is the matter?' and whatever is become of the Proserpine?"

"'Gone to Hell!' says he: which he knows I object to foul language. 'Gone — there —' says he, 'and I am sailing in her wake. O pray for me, Nancy Rouse!'" With that, I tries to pray in my dream, and screams instead, and wakes myself. O Mr. Penfold, do tell me, have you got any news of the Proserpine this morning?"

"What is that to you?" inquired Arthur Wardlaw, who had entered just in time to hear this last query.

"What is it to me!" cried Nancy, firing up; "it is more to me, perhaps, than it is to you, for that matter."

Penfold explained, timidly, "Sir, Mrs. Rouse is my landlady."

"Which I have never been to church with any man yet of the name of Rouse, leastways, not in my waking hours," edged in the lady.

"Miss Rouse, I should say," said Penfold, apologizing. "I beg pardon, but I thought Mrs. might sound better in a landlady. Please, sir, Mr. Wylie, the mate of the Proserpine, is her — her — sweetheart."

"Not he. Leastways, he is only on trial, after a manner."

"Of course, sir — only after a manner," added Penfold, sadly perplexed. "Miss Rouse is incapable of anything else. But, if you please m'm, I don't presume to know the exact relation"; — and then with great reserve — "but, you know you are anxious about him."

Miss Rouse sniffed, and threw her nose in the air,

— as if to throw a doubt even on that view of the matter.

"Well, madam," says Wardlaw, "I am sorry to say I can give you no information. I share your anxiety, for I have got £160,000 of gold in the ship. You might inquire at Lloyd's. Direct her there, Mr. Penfold, and bring me my letters."

With this he entered his inner office, sat down, took out a golden key, opened the portrait of Helen, gazed at it, kissed it, uttered a deep sigh, and prepared to face the troubles of the day.

Penfold brought in a leathern case, like an enormous bill-book: it had thirty vertical compartments: and the names of various cities and seaports, with which Wardlaw and Son did business, were printed in gold letters on some of these compartments; on others, the names of persons; and on two compartments, the word "Miscellaneous." Michael brought this machine in, filled with a correspondence, enough to break a man's heart to look at.

This was one of the consequences of Wardlaw's position. He durst not let his correspondence be read, and filtered, in the outer office: he opened the whole mass; sent some back into the outer office: then touched a hand-bell, and a man emerged from the small apartment adjoining his own. This was Mr. Atkins, his shorthand writer. He dictated to this man some twenty letters which were taken down in shorthand; the man retired to copy them, and write them out in duplicate from his own notes, and this reduced the number to seven: these Wardlaw sat down to write, himself, and lock up the copies.

While he was writing them, he received a visitor or two, whom he despatched as quickly as his letters.

He was writing his last letter, when he heard in the outer office a voice he thought he knew. He got up and listened. It was so. Of all the voices in the city, this was the one it most dismayed him to hear, in his office, at the present crisis.

He listened on, and satisfied himself that a fatal blow was coming. He then walked quietly to his table, seated himself, and prepared to receive the stroke with external composure.

Penfold announced, "Mr. Burtenshaw."

"Show him in," said Wardlaw, quietly.

Mr. Burtenshaw, one of the managers of Morland's bank, came in, and Wardlaw motioned him courteously to a chair, while he finished his letter, which took only a few moments.

While he was sealing it, he half turned to his visitor, and said, "No bad news? Morland's is safe, of course."

"Well," said Burtenshaw, "there is a run upon our bank, — a severe one. We could not hope to escape the effects of the panic."

He then, after an uneasy pause, and with apparent reluctance, added, "I am requested by the other directors to assure you it is their present extremity alone, that — in short, we are really compelled to beg you to repay the amount advanced to you by the bank."

Wardlaw showed no alarm, but great surprise. This was clever; for he felt great alarm, and no surprise.

"The £81,000," said he. "Why, that advance was upon the freight of the Proserpine. Forty-five thousand ounces of gold. She ought to be here by this time. She is in the Channel at this moment, no doubt."

"Excuse me; she is overdue, and the underwriters uneasy. I have made inquiries."

"At any rate, she is fully insured, and you hold the policies. Besides, the name of Wardlaw on your books should stand for bullion."

Burtenshaw shook his head. "Names are at a discount to-day, sir. We can't pay you down on the counter. Why, our depositors look cross at Bank of England notes."

To an inquiry, half ironical, whether the managers really expected him to find £81,000 cash, at a few hours' notice, Burtenshaw replied, sorrowfully, that they felt for his difficulty whilst deploring their own; but that, after all, it was a debt: and, in short, if he could find no means of paying it, they must suspend payment for a time, and issue a statement — and —

He hesitated to complete his sentence, and Wardlaw did it for him.

"And ascribe your suspension to my inability to refund this advance?" said he, bitterly.

"I am afraid that is the construction it will bear."

Wardlaw rose, to intimate he had no more to say.

Burtenshaw, however, was not disposed to go without some clear understanding. "May I say we shall hear from you, sir?"

"Yes."

And so they wished each other good morning; and Wardlaw sank into his chair.

In that quiet dialogue, ruin had been inflicted and received without any apparent agitation; ay, and worse than ruin — exposure.

Morland's suspension, on account of money lost by Wardlaw and Son, would at once bring old Wardlaw to London, and the affairs of the firm would be investigated, and the son's false system of book-keeping be discovered.

He sat stupefied a while, then put on his hat, and rushed to his solicitor; on the way, he fell in with a great talker, who told him there was a rumor the Shannon was lost in the Pacific.

At this he nearly fainted in the street, and his friend took him back to his office in a deplorable condition. All this time he had been feigning anxiety about the Proserpine, and concealing his real anxiety about the Shannon. To do him justice, he lost sight of everything in the world now but Helen. He sent old Penfold in hot haste to Lloyd's, to inquire for news of the ship; and then he sat down sick at heart; and all he could do now was to open her portrait, and gaze at it through eyes blinded with tears. Even a vague rumor, which he hoped might be false, had driven all his commercial manoeuvres out of him, and made all other calamities seem small.

And so they all are small, compared with the death of the creature we love.

While he sat thus, in a stupor of fear and grief, he heard a well-known voice in the outer office; and, next after Burtenshaw's, it was the one that caused him the most apprehension. It was his father's.

Wardlaw senior rarely visited the office now; and this was not his hour. So Arthur knew something extraordinary had brought him up to town. And he could not doubt that it was the panic, and that he had been to Morland's, or would go there in course of the day; but, indeed, it was more probable that he had already heard something, and was come to investigate.

Wardlaw senior entered the room.

"Good morning, Arthur," said he. "I've got good news for you."

Arthur was quite startled by an announcement that accorded so little with his expectations.

"Good news — for me?" said he, in a faint, incredulous tone.

"Ay, glorious news! Have n't you been anxious about the Shannon? I have; more anxious than I would own."

Arthur started up. "The Shannon! God bless you, father."

"She lies at anchor in the Mersey," roared the old man, with all a father's pride at bringing such good news. "Why, the Rollestons will be in London at 2.15. See, here is his telegram."

At this moment, in ran Penfold, to tell them that the Shannon was up at Lloyd's, had anchored off Liverpool last night.

There was hearty shaking of hands, and Arthur Wardlaw was the happiest man in London — for a little while.

"Got the telegram at Elm-trees, this morning, and came up by the first express," said Wardlaw senior.

The telegram was from Sir Edward Rolleston. "*Reached Liverpool last night; will be at Euston, two-fifteen.*"

"Not a word from her!" said Arthur.

"O, there was no time to write; and ladies do not use the telegram." He added, slyly, "Perhaps she thought coming in person would do as well, or better, eh!"

"But why does he telegraph you instead of me?"

"I am sure I don't know. What does it matter? Yes, I do know. It was settled months ago that he and Helen should come to me at Elm-trees, so I was the proper person to telegraph. I'll go and meet them at the station; there is plenty of time. But, I say, Arthur, have you seen the papers? Bartley Brothers obliged to wind up. Maple and Cox, of Liverpool, gone; Atlantic trading. Terry and Brown, suspended, International credit gone. Old friends, some of these. Hopley and Timms, railway contractors, failed, sir; liabilities, seven hundred thousand pounds and more."

"Yes, sir," said Arthur, pompously: "1866 will long be remembered for its revelations of commercial morality."

The old gentleman, on this, asked his son, with excusable vanity, whether he had done ill in steering clear of speculation; he then congratulated him on having listened to good advice, and stuck to legitimate business. "I must say, Arthur," added he, "your books are models for any trading firm."

Arthur winced in secret, under this praise, for, it occurred to him, that in a few days his father would discover those books were all a sham, and the accounts a fabrication.

However, the unpleasant topic was soon interrupted, and effectually, too; for Michael looked in, with an air of satisfaction on his benevolent countenance, and said, "Gentlemen, such an arrival! Here is Miss Rouse's sweetheart, that she dreamed was drowned."

"What is the man to me?" said Arthur, peevishly. He did not recognize Wylie under that title.

"La, Mr. Arthur! why he is the mate of the Proserpine," said Penfold.

"What! Wylie! Joseph Wylie?" cried Arthur, in a sudden excitement, that contrasted strangely with his previous indifference.

"What is that?" cried Wardlaw senior; "the Proserpine; show him in at once."

Now this caused Arthur Wardlaw considerable anxiety; for obvious reasons he did not want his father and this sailor to exchange a word together. However, that was inevitable now: the door opened, and the bronzed face and sturdy figure of Wylie, clad in a rough pea-jacket, came slouching in.

Arthur went hastily to meet him, and gave him an expressive look of warning, even while he welcomed him in cordial accents.

"Glad to see you safe home," said Wardlaw senior.

"Thank ye, gu'nor," said Wylie. "Had a squeak for it, this time."

"Where is your ship?"

Wylie shook his head sorrowfully. "Bottom of the Pacific."

"Good heavens! What; is she lost?"

"That she is, sir: foundered at sea, 1,200 miles from the Horn, and more."

"And the freight? the gold?" put in Arthur, with well-feigned anxiety.

"Not an ounce saved," said Wylie, disconsolately. "A hundred and sixty thousand pounds gone to the bottom."

"Good heavens."

"Ye see, sir," said Wylie, "the ship encountered one gale after another, and labored a good deal, first and last; and we all say her seams must have opened; for we never could find the leak that sunk her," and he cast a meaning glance at Arthur Wardlaw.

"No matter how it happened," said the old merchant: "are we insured to the full; that is the first question?"

"To the last shilling."

"Well done, Arthur."

"But still it is most unlucky. Some weeks must elapse before the insurances can be realized, and a portion of the gold was paid for in bills at short date."

"The rest in cash?"

"Cash and merchandise."

"Then there is the proper margin. Draw on my private account, at the Bank of England."

These few simple words showed the struggling young merchant a way out of all his difficulties.

His heart leaped so, he dared not reply, lest he should excite the old gentleman's suspicions.

But, ere he could well draw his breath, for joy, came a freezer.

"Mr. Burtenshaw, sir."

"Bid him wait," said Arthur aloud, and cast a look of great anxiety on Penfold, which the poor old man, with all his simplicity, comprehended well enough.

"Burtenshaw, from Morland's. What does he want of us?" said Wardlaw senior, knitting his brows.

Arthur turned cold all over. "Perhaps to ask me not to draw out my balance. It is less than usual: but they are run upon; and, as you are good enough to let me draw on you,—by the by, perhaps you will sign a check before you go to the station."

"How much do you want?"

"I really don't know, till I have consulted Penfold: the gold was a large and advantageous purchase, sir."

"No doubt; no doubt. I'll give you my signature; and you can fill in the amount."

He drew a check in favor of Arthur Wardlaw signed it, and left him to fill in the figures.

He then looked at his watch, and remarked they would barely have time to get to the station.

"Good Heavens!" cried Arthur; "and I can't go. I must learn the particulars of the loss of the Proserpine, and prepare the statement at once for the underwriters."

"Well, never mind. I can go."

"But what will she think of me? I ought to be the first to welcome her."

"I'll make your excuses."

"No, no; say nothing: after all, it was you who received the telegram: so you naturally meet her, but you will bring her here, father: you won't whisk my darling down to Elm-trees, till you have blest me with the sight of her."

"I will not be so cruel, fond lover," said old Wardlaw, laughing, and took up his hat and gloves to go.

Arthur went to the door with him, in great anxiety, lest he should question Burtenshaw: but, peering into the outer office, he observed Burtenshaw was not there. Michael had caught his employer's anxious look, and conveyed the Banker into the small room, where the shorthand writer was at work. But Burtenshaw was one of a struggling firm; to him every minute was an hour: he had sat, fuming with impatience, so long as he heard talking in the inner office; and, the moment it ceased, he took the liberty of coming in: so that he opened the side door, just as Wardlaw senior was passing through the centre door.

Instantly Wardlaw junior whipped before him, to hide his figure from his retreating father.

Wylie—who all this time had been sitting silent, looking from one to the other, and quietly puzzling out the game, as well as he could—observed this movement, and grinned.

As for Arthur Wardlaw, he saw his father safe out, then gave a sigh of relief, and walked to his office table, and sat down, and began to fill in the check.

Burtenshaw drew near, and said, "I am instructed to say that fifty thousand pounds on account will be accepted."

Perhaps if this proposal had been made a few seconds sooner, the ingenious Arthur would have availed himself of it: but, as it was, he preferred to take the high and mighty tone. "I decline any concession," said he. "Mr. Penfold, take this check to the Bank of England. £81,647 10s. that is the amount, capital and interest, up to noon this day: hand the sum to Mr. Burtenshaw, taking his receipt, or, if he prefers it, pay it across his counter, to my credit. That will perhaps arrest the run."

Burtenshaw stammered out his thanks.

Wardlaw cut him short. "Good morning, sir," said he. "I have business of importance. Good day," and bowed him out.

"This is a Highflyer," thought Burtenshaw.

Wardlaw then opened the side door, and called his shorthand writer.

"Mr. Atkins, please step into the outer office, and don't let a soul come in to me. Mind, I am out for the day. Except to Miss Rolleston and her father."

He then closed all the doors, and sunk exhausted into a chair, muttering, "Thank Heaven! I have got rid of them all for an hour or two. Now, Wylie."

Wylie seemed in no hurry to enter upon the required subject.

Said he, evasively, "Why, gov'nor, it seems to me you are among the breakers here, yourself."

"Nothing of the sort, if you have managed your work cleverly. Come, tell me all, before we are interrupted again."

"Tell ye all about it! Why there's part on't, I am afraid to think on; let alone talk about it."

"Spare me your scruples, and give me your facts," said Wardlaw, coldly. "First of all, did you succeed in shifting the bullion as agreed?"

The sailor appeared relieved by this question.

"O, that is all right," said he. "I got the bullion safe aboard the Shannon, marked for lead."

"And the lead on board the Proserpine?"

"Ay, shipped as bullion."

"Without suspicion?"

"Not quite."

"Great Heaven! Who?"

"One clerk at the shipping agent's scented something queer, I think. James Seaton. *That was the name he went by.*"

"Could he prove anything?"

"Nothing. He knew nothing for certain; and what he guessed won't never be known in England now." And Wylie fidgeted in his chair.

Notwithstanding this assurance Wardlaw looked grave, and took a note of that clerk's name. Then he begged Wylie to go on. "Give me all the details," said he. "Leave me to judge their relative value. You scuttled the ship?"

"Don't say that! don't say that!" cried Wylie, in a low but eager voice. "Stone walls have ears." Then rather more loudly than was necessary, "Ship sprung a leak, that neither the captain, nor I, nor anybody could find, to stop. Me and my men, we all think her seams opened, with stress of weather." Then, lowering his voice again, "Try and see it as we do; and don't you ever use such a word as that what come out of your lips just now. We pumped her hard; but 't warn't no use. She filled, and we had to take to the boats."

"Stop a moment. Was there any suspicion excited?"

"Not among the crew: and, suppose there was, I could talk 'em all over, or buy 'em all over, what few of 'em is left. I've got 'em all with me in one house: and they are all square, don't you fear?"

"Well, but you said 'among the crew!' Whom else can we have to fear?"

"Why, nobody. To be sure, one of the passengers was down on me; but what does that matter now?"

"It matters greatly,—it matters terribly. Who was this passenger?"

"He called himself the Reverend John Hazel. He suspected something or other; and what with listening here, and watching there, he judged the ship was never to see England, and I always fancied he told the lady."

"What, was there a lady there?"

"Ay, worse luck, sir; and a pretty girl she was: coming home to England to die of consumption; so our surgeon told me."

"Well, never mind her. The clergyman! This fills me with anxiety. A clerk suspecting us at Sydney, and a passenger suspecting us in the vessel. There are two witnesses against us already."

"No; only one."

"How do you make that out?"

"Why, White's clerk and the parson, they was one man."

Wardlaw stared in utter amazement.

"Don't ye believe me?" said Wylie. "I tell ye that there clerk boarded us under an alias. He had shaved off his beard; but, bless your heart, I knew him directly."

"He came to verify his suspicions," suggested Wardlaw, in a faint voice.

"Not he. He came for love of the sick girl, and nothing else; and you'll never see either him or her, if that is any comfort to you."

"Be good enough to conceal nothing. Facts must be faced."

"That is too true, sir. Well, we abandoned her, and took to the boats. I commanded one."

"And Hudson the other?"

"Hudson! No."

"Why, how was that? and what has become of him?"

"What has become of Hudson?" said Wylie, with a start. "There's a question! And not a drop to wet my lips, and warm my heart. Is this a tale to tell, dry? Can't ye spare a drop of brandy to a poor devil that has earned ye £150,000, and risked his life, and wrecked his soul, to do it?"

Wardlaw cast a glance of contempt on him, but got up, and speedily put a bottle of old brandy, a tumbler, and a caraffe of water, on the table before him.

Wylie drank a wine-glassful neat, and gave a sort of sigh of satisfaction. And then ensued a dialogue, in which, curiously enough, the brave man was agitated, and the timid man was cool and collected. But one reason was, the latter had not imagination enough to realize things unseen, though he had caused them.

Wylie told him how Hudson got to the bottle, and would not leave the ship. "I think I see him now, with his cutlass in one hand, and his rum bottle in the other, and the waves running over his poor, silly face, as she went down. Poor Hiram! he and I had made many a trip together, before we took to this."

And Wylie shuddered, and took another gulp at the brandy.

While he was drinking to drown the picture, Wardlaw was calmly reflecting on the bare fact. "Hum," said he, "we must use that circumstance. I'll get it into the journals. Heroic captain. Went down with the ship. Who can suspect Hudson in the teeth of such a fact? Now, pray go on, my good Wylie. The boats!"

"Well, sir, I had the surgeon, and ten men, and the lady's maid, on board the long-boat; and there was the parson, the sick lady, and five sailors aboard the cutter. We sailed together, till night, steering for Juan Fernandez, then a fog came on and we lost sight of the cutter, and I altered my mind and judged it best to beat to win'ard, and get into the track of ships. Which we did, and were nearly swamped in a sou'wester; but, by good luck, a Yankee whaler picked us up, and took us to Buenos Ayres, where we shipped for England, what was left of us, only four, besides myself; but I got the signatures of the others to my tale of the wreck. It is all as square as a die, I tell you."

"Well done. Well done. But, stop! the other boat, with that sham parson on board, who knows all. She will be picked up, too, perhaps."

"There is no chance of that. She was out of the

tracks of trade; and, I'll tell ye the truth, sir." He poured out half a tumbler of brandy, and drank a part of it; and, now, for the first time, his hand trembled as he lifted the glass — "Some fool had put the main of her provisions aboard the long-boat; that is what sticks to me, and won't let me sleep. We took a chance, but we did n't give one. I think I told you there was a woman aboard the cutter, that sick girl, sir. O, but it was hard lines for her, poor thing! I see her face, pale and calm; O Lord, so pale and calm; every night of my life; she kneeled aboard the cutter with her white hands clasped together, praying."

"Certainly, it is all very shocking," said Wardlaw; "but, then, you know, if they had escaped, they would have exposed us. Believe me, it is all for the best."

Wylie looked at him with wonder. "Ay," said he, after staring at him in wonder; "you can sit here at your ease, and doom a ship and risk her people's lives: but, if you had to do it, and see it, and then lie awake thinking of it, you'd wish all the gold on earth had been in hell, before you put your hand to such a piece of work."

Wardlaw smiled a ghastly smile. "In short," said he, "you don't mean to take the three thousand pounds I pay you for this little job."

"O yes, I do; but, for all the gold in Victoria, I would n't do such a job again. And, you mark my words, sir, we shall get the money, and nobody will ever be the wiser." Wardlaw rubbed his hands complacently: his egotism, coupled with his want of imagination, nearly blinded him to everything but the pecuniary feature of the business. "But," continued Wylie, "we shall never thrive on it. We have sunk a good ship, and we have as good as murdered a poor dying girl."

"Hold your tongue, ye fool!" cried Wardlaw, losing his sang froid in a moment, for he heard somebody at the door.

It opened, and there stood a military figure in a travelling cap, — General Rolleston.

CHAPTER XVI.

As some eggs have actually two yolks, so Arthur Wardlaw had two hearts; and at sight of Helen's father, the baser one ceased to beat for a while.

He ran to General Rolleston, shook him warmly by the hand, and welcomed him to England with sparkling eyes.

It is pleasant to be so welcomed, and the stately soldier returned his grasp in kind.

"Is Helen with you, sir?" said Wardlaw, making a movement to go to the door: for he thought she must be outside in the cab.

"No, she is not," said General Rolleston.

"There, now," said Arthur, "that cruel father of mine has broken his promise, and carried her off to Elm-trees!"

At this moment Wardlaw senior returned, to tell Arthur he had been just too late to meet the Rollestons. "O, here he is!" said he; and there were fresh greetings.

"Well, but," said Arthur, "where is Helen?"

"I think it is I who ought to ask that question," said Rolleston, gravely. "I telegraphed you at Elm-trees, thinking of course she would come with you to meet me at the station. It does not much matter, a few hours; but her not coming makes me uneasy, for her health was declining when she left

me. How is my child, Mr. Wardlaw? Pray tell me the truth."

Both the Wardlaws looked at one another, and at General Rolleston, and the elder Wardlaw said there was certainly some misunderstanding here. "We fully believed that your daughter was coming home with you in the Shannon."

"Come home with me? Why, of course not. She sailed three weeks before me. Good Heavens! Has she not arrived?"

"No," replied old Wardlaw "we have neither seen nor heard of her."

"Why, what ship did she sail in?" said Arthur.

"In the Proserpine."

CHAPTER XVII.

ARTHUR WARDLAW fixed on the speaker a gaze full of horror; his jaw fell; a livid pallor spread over his features; he echoed in a hoarse whisper, "the Proserpine!" and turned his scared eyes upon Wylie, who was himself leaning against the wall, his stalwart frame beginning to tremble.

"The sick girl," murmured Wylie, and a cold sweat gathered on his brow.

General Rolleston looked from one to another with strange misgivings, which soon deepened into a sense of some terrible calamity; for now a strong convulsion swelled Arthur Wardlaw's heart; his face worked fearfully; and with a sharp and sudden cry, he fell forward on the table, and his father's arm alone prevented him from sinking like a dead man on the floor. Yet though crushed and helpless, he was not insensible; that blessing was denied him.

General Rolleston implored an explanation.

Wylie, with downcast and averted face, began to stammer a few disconnected and unintelligible words; but old Wardlaw silenced him and said, with much feeling, "Let none but a father tell him. My poor, poor friend, — The Proserpine! How can I say it?"

"Lost at sea," groaned Wylie.

At these fatal words the old warrior's countenance grew rigid; his large, bony hands gripped the back of the chair on which he leaned, and were white with their own convulsive force; and he bowed his head under the blow, without one word.

His was an agony too great and mute to be spoken to; and there was silence in the room, broken only by the hysterical moans of the miserable plotter, who had drawn down this calamity on his own head. He was in no state to be left alone; and even the bereaved father found pity in his desolate heart for one who loved his lost child so well; and the two old men took him home between them, in a helpless and pitiable condition.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BUT this utter prostration of his confederate began to alarm Wylie, and rouse him to exertion. Certainly, he was very sorry for what he had done, and would have undone it and forfeited his £ 3,000 in a moment, if he could. But, as he could not undo the crime, he was all the more determined to reap the reward. Why, that £ 3,000, for aught he knew, was the price of his soul; and he was not the man to let his soul go gratis.

He finished the rest of the brandy, and went after

his men, to keep them true to him by promises; but the next day he came to the office in Fenchurch Street, and asked anxiously for Wardlaw. Wardlaw had not arrived. He waited, but the merchant never came; and Michael told him, with considerable anxiety, that this was the first time his young master had missed coming this five years.

In course of the day, several underwriters came in, with long faces, to verify the report which had now reached Lloyd's, that the *Proserpine* had foundered at sea.

"It is too true," said Michael; "and poor Mr. Wylie here has barely escaped with his life. He was mate of the ship, gentlemen."

Upon this, each visitor questioned Wylie, and Wylie returned the same smooth answer to all inquiries: one heavy gale after another had so tried the ship that her seams had opened, and let in more water than all the exertions of the crew and passengers could discharge; at last, they had taken to the boats; the long-boat had been picked up: the cutter had never been heard of since.

They nearly all asked after the ship's log.

"I have got it safe at home," said he. "It was in his pocket all the time."

Some asked him where the other survivors were. He told them five had shipped on board the *Maria*, and three were with him at Poplar, one disabled by the hardships they had all endured.

One or two complained angrily of Mr. Wardlaw's absence at such a time.

"Well, good gentlemen," said Wylie, "I'll tell ye. Mr. Wardlaw's sweetheart was aboard the ship. He is a'most broken-hearted. He valued her more than all the gold, that you may take your oath on."

This stroke, coming from a rough fellow in a pea-jacket, who looked as simple as he was cunning, silenced remonstrance, and went far to disarm suspicion; and so pleased Michael Penfold, that he said, "Mr. Wylie, you are interested in this business, would you mind going to Mr. Wardlaw's house, and asking what we are to do next? I'll give you his address, and a line, begging him to make an effort and see you. Business is the heart's best ointment. Eh, dear Mr. Wylie, I have known grief too; and I think I should have gone mad when they sent my poor son away, but for business, especially the summing-up of long columns, &c."

Wylie called at the house in Russell Square, and asked to see Mr. Wardlaw.

The servant shook his head. "You can't see him; he is very ill."

"Very ill," said Wylie. "I'm sorry for that. Well, but I sha'n't make him any worse; and Mr. Penfold says I must see him. It is very particular, I tell you. He won't thank you for refusing me, when he comes to hear of it."

He said this very seriously; and the servant, after a short hesitation, begged him to sit down in the passage a moment. He then went into the dining-room, and shortly reappeared, holding the door open. Out came, not Wardlaw junior, but Wardlaw senior.

"My son is in no condition to receive you," said he, gravely; "but I am at your service. What is your business?"

Wylie was taken off his guard, and stammered out something about the *Shannon*.

"The *Shannon*! What have you to do with her? You belonged to the *Proserpine*."

"Ay, sir; but I had his orders to ship forty chests

of lead and smelted copper on board the *Shannon*."

"Well?"

"Ye see, sir," said Wylie, "Mr. Wardlaw was particular about them, and I feel responsible like, having shipped them aboard another vessel."

"Have you not the captain's receipt?"

"That I have, sir, at home. But you could hardly read it for salt water."

"Well," said Wardlaw senior, "I will direct our agent at Liverpool to look after them, and send them up at once to my cellars in Fenchurch Street. Forty chests of lead and copper, I think you said." And he took a note of this directly. Wylie was not a little discomfited at this unexpected turn things had taken; but he held his tongue now, for fear of making bad worse. Wardlaw senior went on to say that he should have to conduct the business of the firm for a time, in spite of his old age and failing health.

This announcement made Wylie perspire with anxiety, and his three thousand pounds seemed to melt away from him.

"But never mind," said old Wardlaw; "I am very glad you came. In fact, you are the very man I wanted to see. My poor afflicted friend has asked after you several times. Be good enough to follow me."

He led the way into the dining-room, and there sat the sad father in all the quiet dignity of calm, unfathomable sorrow.

Another gentleman stood upon the rug with his back to the fire, waiting for Mr. Wardlaw; this was the family physician, who had just come down from Arthur's bedroom, and had entered by another door through the drawing-room.

"Well, doctor," said Wardlaw, anxiously, "what is your report?"

"Not so good as I could wish; but nothing to excite immediate alarm. Overtaxed brain, sir; weakened and unable to support this calamity. However, we have reduced the fever; the symptoms of delirium have been checked, and I think we shall escape brain fever if he is kept quiet. I could not have said as much this morning."

The doctor then took his leave, with a promise to call next morning; and as soon as he was gone, Wardlaw turned to General Rolleston, and said, "Here is Wylie, sir. Come forward, my man, and speak to the General. He wants to know if you can point out to him on the chart the very spot where the *Proserpine* was lost?"

"Well, sir," said Wylie, "I think I could."

The great chart of the Pacific was then spread out upon the table, and rarely has a chart been examined as this was, with the bleeding heart as well as the straining eye.

The rough sailor became an oracle; the others hung upon his words, and followed his brown finger on the chart with fearful interest.

"Ye see, sir," said he, addressing the old merchant, for there was something on his mind that made him avoid speaking directly to General Rolleston, "When we came out of Sydney, the wind being south and by west, Hudson took the northerly course, instead of running through Cook's Straits. The weather freshened from the same quarter, so that, with one thing and another, by when we were a month out, she was five hundred miles or so nor'ard of her true course. But that wasn't all; when the leak gained on us, Hudson ran the ship three hundred miles by my reckoning to the nor'east; and, I remember, the day before

she foundered, he told me she was in latitude forty, and Easter Island bearing due north."

"Here is the spot, then," said General Rolleston, and placed his finger on the spot.

"Ay, sir," said Wylie, addressing the merchant; "but she ran about eighty-five miles after that, on a northerly course — no — wind on her starboard quarter, — and being deep in the water, she'd make lee way, — say eighty-two miles, nor'east by east."

The General took eighty-two miles off the scale, with a pair of dividers, and set out that distance on the chart. He held the instrument fixed on the point thus obtained.

Wylie eyed the point, and after a moment's consideration, nodded his head.

"There, or thereabouts," he said, in a low voice, and looking at the merchant.

A pause ensued, and the two old men examined the speck pricked on the map, as if it were the waters covering the Proserpine.

"Now, sir," said Rolleston, "trace the course of the boats"; and he handed Wylie a pencil.

The sailor slowly averted his head, but stretched out his hand and took it, and traced two lines, the one short and straight, running nearly northeast. "That's the way the cutter headed when we lost her in the night."

The other line ran parallel to the first for half an inch, then turning, bent backwards, and ran due south.

"This was our course," said Wylie.

General Rolleston looked up, and said, "Why did you desert the cutter?"

The mate looked at old Wardlaw, and, after some hesitation, replied, "After we lost sight of her, the men with me declared that we could not reach either Juan Fernandez or Valparaiso with our stock of provisions, and insisted on standing for the sea-track of Australian liners between the Horn and Sydney."

This explanation was received in dead silence. Wylie fidgeted, and his eye wandered round the room.

General Rolleston applied his compasses to the chart. "I find that the Proserpine was not one thousand miles from Easter Island. Why did you not make for that land?"

"We had no charts, sir," said Wylie to the merchant, "and I'm no navigator."

"I see no land laid down hereaway, northeast of the spot where the ship went down."

"No," replied Wylie, "that's what the men said when they made me 'bout ship."

"Then why did you lead the way northeast at all?"

"I'm no navigator," answered the man, sullenly.

He then suddenly stammered out, "Ask my men what we went through. Why, sir (to Wardlaw), I can hardly believe that I am alive, and sit here talking to you about this cursed business. And nobody offers me a drop of anything."

Wardlaw poured him out a tumbler of wine. His brown hand trembled a little, and he gulped the wine down like water.

General Rolleston gave Mr. Wardlaw a look, and Wylie was dismissed. He slouched down the street all in a cold perspiration; but still clinging to his three thousand pounds, though small was now his hope of ever seeing it.

When he was gone General Rolleston paced that large and gloomy room in silence. Wardlaw eyed him with the greatest interest, but avoided speaking

to him. At last he stopped short, and stood erect, as veterans halt, and pointed down at the chart.

"I'll start at once for that spot," said he. "I'll go in the next ship bound to Valparaiso, there I'll charter a small vessel, and ransack those waters for some trace of my poor lost girl."

"Can you think of no better way than that?" said old Wardlaw, gently, and with a slight tone of reproach.

"No, — not at this moment. O yes, by the by, the Greyhound and Dreadnought are going out to survey the islands of the Pacific. I have interest enough to get a berth in the Greyhound."

"What! go in a Government ship! under the orders of a man, under the orders of another man, under the orders of a Board. Why, if you heard our poor girl was alive upon a rock, the Dreadnought would be sure to run up a bunch of red-tape to the fore that moment to recall the Greyhound, and the Greyhound would go back. No," said he, rising suddenly, and confronting the General, and with the color mounting for once in his sallow face, "You sail in no bottom but one freighted by Wardlaw and Son, and the captain shall be under no orders but yours. We have bought the steam sloop Springbok, seven hundred tons. I'll victual her for a year, man her well, and you shall go out in her in less than a week. I give you my hand on that."

They grasped hands.

But this sudden warmth and tenderness coming from a man habitually cold, overpowered the stout General. "What, sir," he faltered; "your own son lies in danger, yet your heart goes so with me — such goodness — it is too much for me."

"No, no," faltered the merchant, affected in his turn; "it is nothing. Your poor girl was coming home in that cursed ship to marry my son. Yes, he lies ill for love of her; God help him and me too; but you must of all. Don't, General; don't! We have got work to do; we must be brave, sir; brave I say, and compose ourselves. Ah, my friend, you and I are of one age; and this is a heavy blow for us: and we are friends no more; it has made us brothers: she was to be my child as well as yours; well now she is my child, and our hearts they bleed together." At this, the truth must be told, the two stout old men embraced one another like two women, and cried together a little.

But that was soon over with such men as these. They sat together and plunged into the details of the expedition, and they talked themselves into hope.

In a week the Springbok steamed down the Channel on an errand inspired by love not reason; to cross one mighty ocean, and grope for a lost daughter in another.

CHAPTER XIX.

WE return to the cutter, and her living freight.

After an anxious, but brief consultation, it was agreed that their best chance was to traverse as many miles of water as possible, while the wind was fair; by this means they would increase their small chance of being picked up, and also of falling in with land, and would, at all events, sail into a lovely climate, where intense cold was unknown, and gales of wind uncommon.

Mr. Hazel advised them to choose a skipper, and give him absolute power, especially over the provisions. They assented to this. He then recom-

mended Cooper for that post. But they had not fathomed the sterling virtues of that taciturn seaman; so they offered the command to Welch, instead.

"Me put myself over Sam Cooper!" said he; "not likely."

Then their choice fell upon Michael Morgan. The other sailors' names were Prince, Fenner, and Mackintosh.

Mr. Hazel urged Morgan to put the crew and passengers on short allowance at once, viz. two biscuits a day, and four table-spoonful of water: but Morgan was a common sailor; he could not see clearly very far ahead; and, moreover, his own appetite counteracted this advice; he dealt out a pound of biscuit and an ounce of ham to each person, night and morning, and a pint of water in course of the day.

Mr. Hazel declined his share of the ham, and begged Miss Rolleston so earnestly, not to touch it, that she yielded a silent compliance.

On the fourth day the sailors were all in good spirits, though the provisions were now very low. They even sang, and spun yarns. This was partly owing to the beauty of the weather.

On the fifth day Morgan announced that he could only serve out one biscuit per day: and this sudden decline caused some dissatisfaction and alarm.

Next day, the water ran so low, that only a tea-spoonful was served out night and morning.

There were murmurs and forebodings.

In all heavy trials and extremities some man or other reveals great qualities, that were latent in him, ay, hidden from himself. And this general observation was verified on the present occasion, as it had been in the Indian mutiny, and many other crises. Hazel came out.

He encouraged the men, out of his multifarious stores of learning. He related at length stories of wrecks and sufferings at sea; which, though they had long been in print, were most of them new to these poor fellows. He told them, among the rest, what the men of the *Bona Dea*, waterlogged at sea, had suffered, — twelve days without any food but a rat and a kitten, — yet had all survived. He gave them some details of the *Wager*, the *Grosvenor*, the *Corbin*, the *Medusa*; but, above all, a most minute account of the *Bounty*, and Bligh's wonderful voyage in an open boat, short of provisions. He moralized on this, and showed his fellow-sufferers it was discipline and self-denial from the first, that had enabled those hungry spectres to survive, and to traverse two thousand eight hundred miles of water, in those very seas; and that in spite of hunger, thirst, disease, and rough weather.

By these means he diverted their minds in some degree from their own calamity, and taught them the lesson they most needed.

The poor fellows listened with more interest than you could have thought possible under the pressure of bodily distress. And Helen Rolleston's hazel eye dwelled on the narrator with unceasing wonder.

Yes, learning and fortitude, strengthened by those great examples learning furnishes, maintained a superiority, even in the middle of the Pacific; and not the rough sailors only, but the lady, who had rejected and scorned his love, hung upon the brave student's words: she was compelled to look up, with wonder, to the man she had hated and despised in her hours of ease.

On the sixth day the provisions failed entirely. Not a crust of bread: not a drop of water.

At 4 P. M. several flying-fish, driven into the air by the dolphins and cat-fish, fell into the sea again near the boat, and one struck the sail sharply, and fell into the boat. It was divided, and devoured raw, in a moment.

The next morning the wind fell, and, by noon, the ocean became like glass.

The horrors of a storm have been often painted; but who has described, or can describe, the horrors of a calm, to a boat-load of hungry, thirsty creatures, whose only chances of salvation or relief are wind and rain?

The beautiful, remorseless sky was one vault of purple, with a great flaming jewel in the centre, whose vertical rays struck, and parched, and scorched the living sufferers; and blistered and baked the boat itself, so that it hurt their hot hands to touch it: the beautiful, remorseless ocean was one sheet of glass, that glared in their blood-shot eyes, and reflected the intolerable heat of heaven upon these poor wretches, who were gnawed to death with hunger; and their raging thirst was fiercer still.

Towards afternoon of the eighth day, Mackintosh dipped a vessel in the sea, with the manifest intention of drinking the salt water.

"Stop him!" cried Hazel, in great agitation; and the others seized him, and overpowered him: he cursed them with such horrible curses, that Miss Rolleston put her fingers in her ears, and shuddered from head to foot. Even this was new to her, to hear foul language.

A calm voice rose in the midst, and said: "Let us pray."

There was a dead silence, and Mr. Hazel knelt down and prayed loud and fervently; and, while he prayed, the furious cries subsided for a while, and deep groans only were heard. He prayed for food, for rain, for wind, for Patience.

The men were not so far gone but they could just manage to say "Amen."

He rose from his knees, and gathered the pale faces of the men together in one glance; and saw that intense expression of agony which physical pain can mould with men's features: and then he strained his eyes over the brassy horizon; but no cloud, no veil of vapor was visible.

"Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink."

"We must be mad," he cried, "to die of thirst, with all this water round us."

His invention being stimulated by this idea, and his own dire need, he eagerly scanned everything in the boat, and his eyes soon lighted on two objects disconnected in themselves, but it struck him he could use them in combination. These were a common glass bottle, and Miss Rolleston's life-preserving jacket, that served her for a couch. He drew this garment over his knees, and considered it attentively; then untwisted the brass nozzle through which the jacket was inflated, and so left a tube, some nine inches in length, hanging down from the neck of the garment.

He now applied his breath to the tube, and the jacket swelling rapidly proved that the whole receptacle was air-tight.

He then allowed the air to escape. Next, he took the bottle and filled it with water from the sea; then he inserted, with some difficulty, and great care, the neck of the bottle into the orifice of the tube: this done, he detached the wire of the brass nozzle, and whipped the tube firmly round the neck of the bottle.

"Now light a fire," he cried. "The master wants it."

This relieved the hell of thirst in some degree: but the sailors could not be persuaded to practise it.

In the afternoon Hazel took Miss Rolleston's Bible from her wasted hands, and read aloud the thirty-second Psalm.

When he had done, one of the sailors asked him to pass the Bible forward. He did so; and in half an hour the leaves were returned him; the vellum binding had been cut off, divided and eaten.

He looked piteously at the leaves, and after a while fell upon his knees, and prayed silently.

He rose, and, with Miss Rolleston's consent, offered the men the leaves as well. "It is the Bread of Life for men's souls, not their bodies," said he. "But God is merciful; I think he will forgive you: for your need is bitter."

Casper replied that the binding was man's, but the pages were God's; and, either for this or another more obvious reason, the leaves were declined.

All that afternoon Hazel was making a sort of mortar screen out of a fragment of wood.

The night that followed was darker than usual, and about midnight, a hand was laid on Helen Rolleston's shoulder, and a voice whispered, "Hush! say nothing. I have got something for you."

At the same time, something sweet and delicious as fragrant was put to her lips; she opened her mouth, and received a spoonful of marmalade. Never did marmalade taste like that before. It disappeared like Ambrosia over her palate, and even softened her parched throat in some slight degree by the saliva it excited.

Nature could not be resisted; her body took whatever he gave. But her high mind rebelled.

"How base I am," said she, and wept.

"Why, it is your own," said he, soothingly; "I took it out of your cabin expressly for you."

"At least, do give me by eating some yourself, sir," said Helen; "or (with a sudden burst) I will die ere I touch another morsel."

"I will not," he threatened, Miss Rolleston; but I do not need to say I am very, very hungry. But no; if I take any, I must divide it all with them. But if you will let me unzip the jacket, I will suck the inside of the lining."

Helen gazed at him, and wondered at the man, and at the strange love which had so bitterly offended her, when she was surrounded by comforts; but now he extorted her respect.

They unzipped the jacket, and found some moist morsels. They sucked it, and it was a wonderful, almost blissful relief to their parched gullets.

The next day was a fearful one. Not a cloud in the sky gave hope of rain; the air so light, it only drove them along; and the sea glared, and the sun beat on the poor wretches, now tortured and maddened with hunger and thirst.

The only of man, in this dire extremity, can suffer mental agony as acute as any that can be inflicted on his surface by the knife; and the cries, the groans, the prayers, the curses, intermingled that issued from the boat, were not to be distinguished from the cries of men horribly wounded, or writhing under some terrible operation.

It was terrible and piteous to see and hear the wretched of ghastly victims, with hollow cheeks, and sunken eyes, go groaning, cursing, and shouting loud, upon that fair glassy sea, below that blue vault and glorious sun.

Towards afternoon, the sailors got together, for

ward, and left Hazel and Miss Rolleston alone in the stern. This gave him an opportunity of speaking to her confidentially. He took advantage of it, and said, "Miss Rolleston, I wish to consult you. Am I justified in secreting the marmalade any longer? There is nearly a spoonful apiece."

"No," said Helen, "divide it amongst them all. O, if I had only a woman beside me, to pray with, and cry with, and die with: for die we must."

"I am not so sure of that," said Hazel, faintly, "with a cruel fortitude all his own. Experience proves that the human body can subsist a prodigious time on very little food: and saturating the clothes with water is, I know, the best way to allay thirst. And women, thank Heaven, last longer than men, under privations."

"I shall not last long, sir," said Helen. "Look at their eyes."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that those men there are going to kill me."

CHAPTER XX.

HAZEL thought her reason was going; and, instead of looking at the men's eyes, it was hers he examined. But no; the sweet cheek was white, the eyes had a fearful hollow all round them, but, out of that cave, the light hazel eye, preternaturally large, but calm as ever, looked out, full of fortitude, resignation, and reason.

"Don't look at me," said she, quietly; "but take an opportunity and look at *them*. They mean to kill me."

Hazel looked furtively round; and, being enlightened in part by the woman's intelligence, he observed that some of the men were actually glaring at himself and Helen Rolleston, in a dreadful way. There was a remarkable change in their eyes since he looked last. The pupils seemed diminished, the whites enlarged; and, in a word, the characteristics of humanity had, somehow, died out of those blood-shot orbs, and the animal alone shone in them now; the wild beast, driven desperate by hunger.

What he saw, coupled with Helen's positive interpretation of it, was truly sickening.

These men were six, and he but one. They had all clasp-knives; and he had only an old penknife that would be sure to double up, or break off, if a blow were dealt with it.

He asked himself, in utter terror, what on earth he should do.

The first thing seemed to be to join the men, and learn their minds: it might also be as well to prevent this secret conference from going further.

He went forward boldly, though sick at heart, and said, "Well, my lads, what is it?"

The men were silent directly, and looked sullenly down, avoiding his eye; yet not ashamed.

In a situation so terrible, the senses are sharpened; and Hazel dissected, in his mind, this sinister look, and saw that Morgan, Prince, and Mackintosh were hostile to him.

But Welch and Cooper he hoped were still friendly.

"Sir," said Fenner, civilly but doggedly, "we are come to this now, that one must die, for the others to live: and the greater part of us are for casting lots all round, and let every man, and every woman too, take their chance. That is fair, Sam, isn't it?"

"It is fair," said Cooper, with a terrible doggedness. "But it is hard," he added.

"Harder than seven should die for one," said Mackintosh. "No, no; one must die for the seven."

Hazel represented, with all the force language possesses, that what they meditated was a crime, the fatal result of which was known by experience.

But they heard in ominous silence.

Hazel went back to Helen Rolleston, and sat down right before her.

"Well!" said she, with supernatural calmness.

"You were mistaken," said he.

"Then why have you placed yourself between them and me. No, no; their eyes have told me they have singled me out. But what does it matter? We poor creatures are all to die; and that one is the happiest that dies first, and dies unstained by such a crime. *I heard every word you said, sir.*"

Hazel cast a piteous look on her, and, finding he could no longer deceive her as to their danger, and being weakened by famine, fell to trembling and crying.

Helen Rolleston looked at him with calm and gentle pity. For a moment, the patient fortitude of a woman made her a brave man's superior.

Night came, and, for the first time, Hazel claimed two portions of the rum; one for himself and one for Miss Rolleston.

He then returned aft, and took the helm. He loosened it, so as to be ready to unship it in a moment, and use it as a weapon.

The men huddled together forward; and it was easy to see that the boat was now divided into two hostile camps.

Hazel sat quaking, with his hand on the helm, fearing an attack every moment.

Both he and Helen listened acutely, and, about three o'clock in the morning, a new incident occurred, of a terrible nature.

Mackintosh was heard to say, "Serve out the rum, no allowance," and the demand was instantly complied with by Morgan.

Then Hazel touched Miss Rolleston on the shoulder, and insisted on her taking half what was left of the marmalade, and he took the other half. The time was gone by for economy; what they wanted now was strength, in case the wild beasts, maddened by drink as well as hunger, should attack them.

Already the liquor had begun to tell, and wild hallos and yells, and even fragments of ghastly songs, mingled with the groans of misery, in the doomed boat.

At sunrise there was a great swell upon the water, and sharp gusts at intervals; and on the horizon, to windward, might be observed a black spot in the sky, no bigger than a fly. But none saw that; Hazel's eye never left the raving wretches in the fore-part of the boat; Cooper and Welch sat in gloomy despair amidships; and the others were huddled together forward, encouraging each other to a desperate act.

It was about eight o'clock in the morning Helen Rolleston awoke from a brief doze, and said, "Mr. Hazel, I have had a strange dream. I dreamed there was food, and plenty of it, on the outside of this boat."

While these strange words were yet in her mouth, three of the sailors suddenly rose up with their knives drawn, and eyes full of murder, and staggered aft as fast as their enfeebled bodies could.

Hazel uttered a loud cry, "Welch! Cooper! will

you see us butchered?" and, unshipping the helm, rose to his feet.

Cooper put out his arm to stop Mackintosh, but was too late. He did stop Morgan, however, and said, "Come, none of that; no foul play!"

Irritated by this unexpected resistance, and maddened by drink, Morgan turned on Cooper and stabbed him; he sank down with a groan; on this Welch gave Morgan a fearful gash, dividing his jugular, and was stabbed, in return, by Prince, but not severely: these two grappled and rolled over one another, stabbing and cursing at the bottom of the boat; meantime, Mackintosh was received by Hazel with a point blank thrust in the face from the helm, that staggered him, though a very powerful man, and drove him backwards against the mast; but, in delivering this thrust, Hazel's foot slipped, and he fell with great violence on his head and arm; Mackintosh recovered himself, and sprang upon the stern thwart with his knife up and gleaming over Helen Rolleston. Hazel writhed round where he lay, and struck him desperately on the knee with the helm. The poor woman knew only how to suffer; she cowered a little, and put up two feeble hands.

The knife descended.

But not upon that cowering figure.

CHAPTER XXI.

A PURPLE rippling line upon the water had for some little time been coming down upon them with great rapidity; but, bent on bloody work, they had not observed it. The boat heeled over under the sudden gust; but the ruffian had already lost his footing under Hazel's blow, and the boom striking him almost at the same moment, he went clean over the gunwale into the sea; he struck it with his knife first.

All their lives were now gone if Cooper, who had already recovered his feet, had not immediately cut the sheet with his knife; there was no time to slack it; and even as it was, the lower part of the sail was drenched, and the boat full of water. "Ship the helm!" he roared.

The boat righted directly the sheet was cut, the wet sail flapped furiously, and the boat having way on her yielded to the helm and wriggled slowly away before the whistling wind.

Mackintosh rose a few yards astern, and swam after the boat, with great glaring eyes; the loose sail was not drawing, but the wind moved the boat onward. However, Mackintosh gained slowly, and Hazel held up an oar like a spear, and shouted to him that he must promise solemnly to forego all violence, or he should never come on board alive.

Mackintosh opened his mouth to reply; but, at the same moment, his eyes suddenly dilated in a fearful way, and he went under water, with a gurgling cry. Yet, not like one drowning, but with a jerk.

The next moment there was a great bubbling of the water, as if displaced by some large creatures struggling below, and then the surface was stained with blood.

And, lest there should be any doubt as to the wretched man's fate, the huge back fin of a monstrous shark came soon after, gliding round and round the rolling boat, awaiting the next victim.

Now, while the water was yet stained with his life-blood, who, hurrying to kill, had met with a vio-

lent death, the unwounded sailor, Fenner, excited by the fracas, broke forth into singing, and so completed the horror of a wild and awful scene: for still while he shouted, laughed, and sang, the shark swam calmly round and round, and the boat crept on, her white sail bespattered with blood,—which was not so before,—and in her bottom lay one man dead as a stone; and two poor wretches, Prince and Welch, their short-lived feud composed forever, sat openly sucking their bleeding wounds, to quench for a moment, their intolerable thirst.

O, little do we, who never pass a single day without bite or sup, know the animal man, in these dire extremities.

CHAPTER XXII.

At last Cooper ordered Fenner to hold his jaw, and come aft, and help sail the boat.

But the man, being now stark mad, took no notice of the order. His madness grew on him, and took a turn by no means uncommon in these cases. He saw before him sumptuous feasts, and streams of fresh water flowing. These he began to describe with great volubility and rapture, smacking his lips and exulting: and so he went on tantalizing them till noon.

Meantime, Cooper asked Mr. Hazel if he could sail the boat.

"I can steer," said he, "but that is all. My right arm is benumbed."

The silvery voice of Helen Rolleston then uttered brave and welcome words. "I will do whatever you tell me, Mr. Cooper."

"Long life to you, miss!" said the wounded seaman. He then directed her how to reef the sail, and splice the sheet which he had been obliged to cut; and, in a word, to sail the boat; which she did with some little assistance from Hazel.

And so they all depended upon her, whom some of them had been for killing: and the blood-stained boat glided before the wind.

At two P.M. Fenner jumped suddenly up, and, looking at the sea with rapture, cried out, "Aha! my boys, here's a beautiful green meadow; and there's a sweet brook with bulrushes: green, green, green! Let's have a roll among the daisies." And, in a moment, ere any of his stiff and wounded shipmates could put out a hand, he threw himself on his back upon the water, and sunk forever, with inexpressible rapture on his corpse-like face.

A feeble groan was the only tribute those who remained behind could afford him.

At three P.M. Mr. Hazel happened to look over the weather-side of the boat, as she heeled to leeward under a smart breeze, and he saw a shell or two fastened to her side, about eleven inches above keel. He looked again, and gave a loud hurrah. "Barnacles! barnacles!" he cried. "I see them sticking."

He leaned over, and, with some difficulty, detached one, and held it up.

It was not a barnacle, but a curious oblong shell-fish, open at one end.

At sight of this, the wounded forgot their wounds, and leaned over the boat's side, detaching the shell-fish with their knives. They broke them with the handles of their knives, and devoured the fish. They were as thick as a man's finger, and about an inch long, and as sweet as a nut. It seems that is

the long calm these shell-fish had fastened on the boat. More than a hundred of them were taken off her weather-side, and evenly divided.

Miss Rolleston, at Hazel's earnest request, ate only six, and these very slowly, and laid the rest by. But the sailors could not restrain themselves; and Prince, in particular, gorged himself so fiercely that he turned purple in the face, and began to breathe very hard.

That black speck on the horizon, had grown by noon to a beetle, and by three o'clock to something more like an elephant, and it now diffused itself into a huge black cloud, that gradually overspread the heavens; and at last, about half an hour before sunset, came a peculiar chill, and then, in due course, a drop or two fell upon the parched wretches. They sat, less like animals than like plants, all stretching towards their preserver.

Their eyes were turned up to the clouds, so were their open mouths, and their arms and hands held up towards it.

The drops increased in number, and praise went up to heaven in return.

Patter, patter, patter; down came a shower, a rain, — a heavy, steady rain.

With cries of joy, they put out every vessel to catch it; they lowered the sail, and, putting ballast in the centre, bellied it into a great vessel to catch it. They used all their spare canvas to catch it. They filled the water-cask with it; they filled the keg that had held the fatal spirit; and all the time they were sucking the wet canvas, and their own clothes, and their very hands and garments on which the life-giving drops kept falling.

Then they set their little sail again, and prayed for land to Him who had sent them wind and rain.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE breeze declined at sunset; but it rained at intervals during the night; and by the morning they were somewhat chilled.

Death had visited them again during the night. Prince was discovered dead and cold; his wounds were mere scratches, and there seems to be no doubt that he died by gorging himself with more food than his enfeebled system could possibly digest.

Thus dismally began a day of comparative bodily comfort, but mental distress, especially to Miss Rolleston and Mr. Hazel.

Now that this lady and gentleman were no longer goaded to madness by physical suffering, their higher sensibilities resumed their natural force, and the miserable contents of the blood-stained boat shocked them terribly. Two corpses and two wounded men.

Mr. Hazel, however, soon came to one resolution, and that was to read the funeral service over the dead, and then commit them to the deep. He declared this intention, and Cooper, who, though wounded, and apparently sinking, was still skipper of the boat, acquiesced readily.

Mr. Hazel then took the dead men's knives and their money out of their pockets, and read the burial-service over them; they were then committed to the deep. This sad ceremony performed, he addressed a few words to the survivors.

"My friends, and brothers in affliction, we ought not to hope too much from Divine mercy for ourselves; or we should come soon to forget Divine justice. But we are not forbidden to hope for

others. Those, who are now gone, were guilty of a terrible crime; but then they were tempted more than their flesh could bear; and they received their punishment here on earth: we may therefore hope they will escape punishment hereafter. And it is for us to profit by their fate, and bow to Heaven's will: even when they drew their knives, food in plenty was within their reach, and the signs of wind were on the sea, and of rain in the sky. Let us be more patient than they were, and place our trust — What is that upon the water to leeward? A piece of wood floating?"

Welch stood up and looked. "Can't make it out. Steer alongside it, miss, if you please." And he crept forward.

Presently he became excited, and directed those in the stern how to steer the boat close to the object without going over it. He begged them all to be silent. He leaned over the boat side as they neared it. He clutched it suddenly with both hands and flung it into the boat with a shout of triumph; but sank exhausted by the effort.

It was a young turtle; and being asleep on the water, or inexperienced, had allowed them to capture it.

This was indeed a godsend: twelve pounds of succulent meat. It was instantly divided, and Mr. Hazel contrived, with some difficulty, to boil a portion of it. He enjoyed it greatly; but Miss Rolleston showed a curious and violent antipathy to it, scarcely credible under the circumstances. Not so the sailors. They devoured it raw, what they could get at all. Cooper could only get down a mouthful or two: he had received his death-wound, and was manifestly sinking.

He revived, however, from time to time, and spoke cheerfully, whenever he spoke at all. Welch informed him of every incident that took place, however minute. Then he would nod, or utter a syllable or two.

On being told that they were passing through seaweed, he expressed a wish to see some of it, and when he had examined it, he said to Hazel, "Keep up your heart, sir; you are not a hundred miles from land." He added gently, after a pause, "but I am bound for another port."

About five in the afternoon, Welch came aft, with the tears in his eyes, to say that Sam was just going to slip his cable, and had something to say to them.

They went to him directly, and Hazel took his hand, and exhorted him to forgive all his enemies.

"Ha'n't a got none," was the reply.

Hazel then, after a few words of religious exhortation and comfort, asked him if he could do anything for him.

"Ay," said Cooper, solemnly. "Got pen and ink aboard, any of ye?"

"I have a pencil," said Helen, earnestly; then tearfully, "O dear! it is to make his will." She opened her prayer-book which had two blank leaves under each cover.

The dying man saw them, and rose into that remarkable energy, which sometimes precedes the departure of the soul.

"Write!" said he, in his deep, full tones.

"I, Samuel Cooper, able seaman, am going to slip my cable, and sail into the presence of my Maker."

He waited till this was written.

"And so I speak the truth."

"The ship Proserpine was destroyed wilful."

"The men had more allowance than they signed for."

"The mate was always plying the captain with liquor."

"Two days before ever the ship leaked, the mate got the long-boat ready."

"When the Proserpine sank, we was on her port quarter, aboard the cutter, was me and my messmate Tom Welch."

"We saw two auger holes in her stern, about two inches diameter."

"Them two holes was made from within, for the splinters showed outside."

"She was a good ship, and met with no stress of weather to speak of, on that voyage."

"Joe Wylie scuttled her and destroyed her people."

"D—n his eyes!"

Mr. Hazel was shocked at this finale: but he knew what sailors are, and how little meaning there is in their set phrases. However, as a clergyman, he could not allow these to be Cooper's last words; so he said earnestly, "Yes, but my poor fellow, you said you forgave all your enemies. We all need forgiveness, you know."

"That is true, sir."

"And you forgive this Wylie, do you not?"

"O Lord, yes," said Cooper, faintly. "I forgive the lubber; d—n him!"

Having said these words with some difficulty, he became lethargic, and so remained for two hours. Indeed he spoke but once more, and that was to Welch; though they were all about him then. "Messmate," said he, in a voice that was now faint and broken, "you and I must sail together on this new voyage. I'm going out of port first; but" (in a whisper of inconceivable tenderness and simple cunning) "I'll lie to outside the harbor till you come out, my boy." Then he paused a moment. Then he added, softly, "For I love you, Tom."

These sweet words were the last of that rugged, silent sailor, who never threw a word away, and whose rough breast enclosed a friendship as of the ancient world, tender, true, and everlasting; that sweetened his life and ennobled his death. As he deserved mourners, so he had true ones. His last words went home to the afflicted hearts that heard them, and the lady and gentleman, whose lives he had saved at cost of his own, wept aloud over their departed friend. But his messmate's eye was dry. When all was over, he just turned to the mourners, and said, gravely, "Thank ye, sir; thank ye kindly, ma'am." And then he covered the body decently with the spare canvas, and lay quietly down, with his own head pillowed upon those loved remains.

Towards afternoon, seals were observed sporting on the waters; but no attempt was made to capture them. Indeed, Miss Rolleston had quite enough to do to sail the boat with Mr. Hazel's assistance.

The night passed, and the morning brought noth-

ing new; except that they fell in with sea-weed in such quantities, the boat could hardly get through it.

Mr. Hazel examined this sea-weed carefully, and brought several kinds upon deck. Amongst the varieties, was one like thin green strips of spinach, very tender and succulent. His botanical researches included sea-weed, and he recognized this as one of the edible rock-weeds.

There was very little of it comparatively, but he took great pains, and, in two hours' time, had gathered as much as might fill a good slop-basin.

He washed it in fresh water, and then asked Miss Rolleston for a pocket handkerchief. This he tied so as to make a bag, and contrived to boil it with the few chips of fuel that remained on board.

After he had boiled it ten minutes, there was no more fuel, except a bowl or two, and the boat-hook, one pair of oars, and the midship and stern thwarts.

He tasted it, and found it glutinous and delicious; he gave Miss Rolleston some, and then fed Welch with the rest. He, poor fellow, enjoyed this sea spinach greatly; he could no longer swallow meat.

While Hazel was feeding him, a flight of ducks passed over their heads, high in the air.

Welch pointed up at them.

"Ah!" said Helen, "if we had but their wings!"

Presently a bird was seen coming in the same direction, but flying very low; it wobbled along towards them very slowly, and at last, to their great surprise, came flapping and tried to settle on the gunwale of the boat. Welch, with that instinct of slaughter which belongs to men, struck the boat-hook into the bird's back and it was soon despatched. It proved to be one of that very flock of ducks that had passed over their heads, and a crab was found fastened to its leg. It is supposed that the bird, to break its long flight, had rested on some reef, and, perhaps, been too busy fishing; and caught this Tartar.

Hazel pounced upon it. "Heaven has sent this for you, because you cannot eat turtle." But the next moment he blushed and recovered his reason. "See," said he, referring to her own words, "this poor bird had wings, yet death overtook her."

He sacrificed a bowl for fuel, and boiled the duck and the crab in one pot, and Miss Rolleston ate demurely but plentifully of both. Of the crab's shell he made a little drinking-vessel for Miss Rolleston.

Cooper remained without funeral rites all this time; the reason was that Welch lay with his head pillowed upon his dead friend, and Hazel had not the heart to disturb him.

But it was the survivors' duty to commit him to the deep, and so Hazel sat down by Welch, and asked him kindly whether he would not wish the services of the Church to be read over his departed friend.

"In course, sir," said Welch. But the next moment he took Hazel's meaning, and said hurriedly, "No, no; I can't let Sam be buried in the sea. Ye see, sir, Sam and I, we are used to one another, and I can't abide to part with him, alive or dead."

"Ah!" said Hazel, "the best friends must part when death takes one."

"Ay, ay, when t'other lives. But, Lord bless you, sir! I sha'n't be long astarn of my messmate here; can't you see that?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Hazel, surprised and alarmed. "Why you are not wounded mortally, as Cooper was. Have a good heart, man, and we three will all see old England yet."

"Well, sir," said Welch, coolly, "I'll tell ye: me and my shipmate, Prince, was a cutting at one another with our knives a smart time, (and I do properly wonder, when I think of that day's work, for I liked the man well enough, but rum atop of starvation plays hell with seafaring men), well sir, as I was a-saying, he let more blood out of me than I could afford to lose under the circumstances. And, ye see, I can't make fresh blood, because my throat is so swelled by the drought, I can't swallow much meat, so I'm safe to lose the number of my mess; and, another thing, my heart is n't altogether set towards living. Sam, here, he give me an order; what, did n't ye hear him? 'I'll lie to outside the bar,' says he, 'till you come out.' He expects me to come out in his wake. Don't ye, Sam,—that was?— and he laid his hand gently on the remains. "Now, sir, I shall ax the lady and you a favor. I want to lie alongside Sam. But if you bury him in the sea, and me ashore, why d—n my eyes if I shan't be a thousand years or so before I can find my own messmate. Eternity is a 'nation big place, I'm told, a hundred times as big as both oceans. No, sir; you'll make land, by Sam's reckoning, to-morrow, or next day, wind and tide permitting. I'll take care of Sam's hull till then, and we'll lie together till the angel blows that there trumpet; and then we'll go aloft together, and, as soon as ever we have made our scrape to our betters, we'll both speak a good word for you and the lady, a very pretty lady she is, and a good-hearted, and the best plucked one I ever did see in any distressed craft; now don't ye cry, miss, don't ye cry, your trouble is pretty near over; he said you was not a hundred miles from land: I don't know how he knew that, he was always a better seaman than I be; but say it he did, and that is enough, for he was a man as never told a lie, nor wasted a word."

Welch could utter no more just then; for the glands of his throat were swollen, and he spoke with considerable difficulty.

What could Hazel reply? The judgment is sometimes ashamed to contradict the heart with cold reasons.

He only said, with a sigh, that he saw no signs of land, and believed they had gone on a wrong course, and were in the heart of the Pacific.

Welch made no answer, but a look of good-natured contempt. The idea of this parson contradicting Sam Cooper!

The sun broke, and revealed the illimitable ocean; themselves a tiny speck on it.

Mr. Hazel whispered Miss Rolleston that Cooper must be buried to-day.

At ten P. M. they passed through more sea-weed; but this time they had to eat the sea-spinach raw, and there was very little of it.

At noon, the sea was green in places.

Welch told them this was a sign they were nearing land.

At four P. M. a bird, about the size and color of a woodpecker, settled on the boat's mast.

Their glittering eyes fastened on it; and Welch said, "Come, there's a supper for you as can eat it."

"No, poor thing!" said Helen Rolleston.

"You are right," said Hazel, with a certain effort of self-restraint. "Let our sufferings make us gentle, not savage: that poor bird is lost like us upon this ocean. It is a land-bird."

"How do you know?"

"Water-birds have webbed feet,—to swim with."

The bird, having rested, flew to the northwest.

Helen, by one of those inspired impulses her sex have, altered the boat's course directly, and followed the bird.

Half an hour before sunset, Helen Rolleston, whose vision was very keen, said she saw something at the verge of the horizon, like a hair standing upright.

Hazel looked, but could not see anything.

In ten minutes more, Helen Rolleston pointed it out again; and then Hazel did see a vertical line, more like a ship's mast, than anything else one could expect to see there.

Their eyes were now strained to make it out, and, as the boat advanced, it became more and more palpable, though it was hard to say exactly what it was.

Five minutes before the sun set, the air being clearer than ever, it stood out clean against the sky. A tree,—a lofty, solitary tree; with a tall stem, like a column, and branches only at the top.

A palm-tree—in the middle of the Pacific.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AND but for the land-bird which rested on their mast, and for their own mercy in sparing it, they would have passed to the eastward, and never seen that giant palm-tree in mid-ocean.

"O, let us put out all our sails, and fly to it!" cried Helen.

Welch smiled and said, "No, miss, ye must n't. Lord love ye; what! run on to a land ye don't know, happy go lucky, in the dark, like that? Lay her head for the tree, and welcome, but you must lower the mainsail, and treble-reef the foresail; and so creep on a couple of knots an hour, and, by day-break, you'll find the island close under your lee. Then you can look out for a safe landing-place."

"The island, Mr. Welch!" said Helen. "There is no island, or I should have seen it."

"O, the island was hull down. Why, you don't think as palm-trees grow in the water? You do as I say, or you'll get wrecked on some thundering reef or other."

Upon this Mr. Hazel and Miss Rolleston set to work, and, with considerable difficulty lowered the mainsail, and treble-reefed the foresail.

"That is right," said Welch. "To-morrow, you'll land in safety, and bury my messmate and me."

"O no!" cried Helen Rolleston. "We must bury him, but we mean to cure you."

They obeyed Welch's instructions, and so crept on all night; and, so well had this able seaman calculated distance and rate of sailing, that, when the sun rose, sure enough there was an island under their lee, distant about a league, though it looked much less. But the palm-tree was more than twice that distance. Owing to wind and current they had made lee-way all night, and that tree stood on the most westerly point of the island.

Hazel and Miss Rolleston stood up and hurrahed for joy; then fell on their knees in silent gratitude. Welch only smiled.

But the breeze had freshened, and, though there were no great waves at sea, yet breakers, formidable to such a craft as theirs, were seen foaming over long disjointed reefs ahead, that grinned black and dangerous here and there.

They then consulted Welch, and he told them

they must tack directly, and make a circuit of the island; he had to show them how to tack; and, the sea rising, they got thoroughly wetted, and Miss Rolleston rather frightened; for here was a peril they had wonderfully escaped hitherto.

However, before eleven o'clock, they had stood out to sea, and coasted the whole south side of the island: they then put the boat before the wind, and soon ran past the east coast, which was very narrow,—in fact, a sort of bluff-head,—and got on the north side of the island. Here the water was comparatively smooth, and the air warm and balmy. They ranged along the coast at about a mile's distance, looking out for a good landing.

Here was no longer an unbroken line of cliffs, but an undulating coast, with bulging rocks, and lines of reef. After a mile or two of that the coast ran out seaward, and they passed close to a most extraordinary phenomenon of vegetation. Great tangled woods crowned the shore and the landward slopes, and their grand foliage seemed to flow over into the sea: for here was a broad rocky flat, intersected with a thousand little channels of the sea; and the thousand little islets so formed, were crowded, covered, and hidden with luxuriant vegetation. Huge succulent leaves of the richest hue hung over the water, and some of the most adventurous showed, by the crystals that sparkled on their green surface, that the waves had actually been kissing them at high tide. This ceased, and they passed under a cliff, wooded nearly to the point.

This cliff was broad and irregular, and in one of its cavities a cascade of pure fresh water came sparkling, leaping and tumbling down to the foot of the rock. There it had formed a great basin of water, cool, deep, transparent, which trickled over on to a tongue of pink sand, and went in two crystal gutters to the sea.

Great and keen was the rapture this sight caused our poor parched voyagers; and eager their desire to land at once, if possible, and plunge their burning lips, and swelling throats, and fevered hands into that heavenly liquid; but the next moment they were diverted from that purpose by the scene that burst on them.

This wooded cliff, with its wonderful cascade, was the very gate of paradise. They passed it, and in one moment were in a bay,—a sudden bay, wonderfully deep for its extent, and sheltered on three sides. Broad sands with rainbow tints, all sparkling, and dotted with birds, some white as snow, some gorgeous. A peaceful sea of exquisite blue kissing these lovely sands with myriad dimples; and, from the land side, soft emerald slopes, embroidered with silver threads of water, came to the very edge of the sands; so that, from all those glorious hues, that flecked the prismatic and sparkling sands, the eye of the voyagers passed at once to the vivid, yet sweet and soothing, green of Nature; and over this paradise, the breeze they could no longer feel, wafted spicy but delicate odors from unseen trees.

Even Welch raised himself in the boat, and sniffed the heavenly air, and smiled at the heavenly spot. "Here's a blessed haven!" said he. "Down sail, and row her ashore."

CHAPTER XXV

THEY rowed more than a mile, so deep was the glorious bay; and then their oars struck the ground.

But Hazel with the boat-hook propelled the boat gently over the pellucid water, that now seemed too shallow to float a canoe; and at last looked like the mere varnish of that picture, the prismatic sands below; yet still the little craft glided over it, till it gently grazed the soft sand, and was stationary. So placidly ended that terrible voyage.

Mr. Hazel and Miss Rolleston were on shore in a moment, and it was all they could do not to fall upon the land and kiss it.

Never had the sea disgorged upon that fairy isle such ghastly spectres. They looked, not like people about to die, but that had died, and been buried, and just come out of their graves to land on that blissful shore. We should have started back with horror; but the birds of that virgin isle merely stepped out of their way, and did not fly.

They had landed in paradise.

Even Welch yielded to that universal longing men have to embrace the land after perils at sea, and was putting his leg slowly over the gunwale, when Hazel came back to his assistance. He got ashore, but was contented to sit down with his eyes on the dimpled sea and the boat, waiting quietly till the tide should float his friend to his feet again.

The sea-birds walked quietly about him, and minded him not.

Miss Rolleston ascended a green slope very slowly, for her limbs were cramped, and was lost to view.

Hazel now went up the beach, and took a more minute survey of the neighborhood.

The west side of the bay was varied. Half of it presented the soft character that marked the bay in general; but a portion of it was rocky, though streaked with vegetation, and this part was intersected by narrow clefts, into which, in some rare tempests and high tides combined, tongues of the sea had entered, licking the sides of the gullies smooth; and these occasional visits were marked by the sand, and broken shells, and other *débris* the tempestuous and encroaching sea had left behind.

The true high-water mark was several feet lower than these *débris*, and was clearly marked. On the land above the cliffs he found a tangled jungle of tropical shrubs, into which he did not penetrate, but skirted it, and walking eastward, came out upon a delicious down or grassy slope, that faced the centre of the bay. It was a gentleman's lawn of a thousand acres, with an extremely gentle slope from the centre of the island down to the sea.

A river flowing from some distant source ran eastward through this down, but at its verge, and almost encircled it. Hazel traversed the lawn until this river, taking a sudden turn towards the sea, intercepted him at a spot which he immediately fixed on as Helen Rolleston's future residence.

Four short, thick, umbrageous trees stood close to the stream on this side, and on the eastern side was a grove of gigantic palm-trees, at whose very ankles the river ran. Indeed, it had undermined one of these palm-trees, and that giant at this moment lay all across the stream, leaving a gap through which Hazel's eye could pierce to a great depth among those grand columns; for they stood wide apart, and there was not a vestige of brushwood, jungle, or even grass, below their enormous crowns. He christened the place St. Helen's on the spot.

He now dipped his baler into the stream and found it pure and tolerably cool.

He followed the bend of the stream; it evaded the slope and took him by its own milder descent to the

sands: over these it flowed smooth as glass into the sea.

Hazel ran to Welch to tell him all he had discovered, and to give him his first water from the island.

He found a roan-colored pigeon, with a purplish neck, perched on the sick man's foot. The bird shone like a rainbow, and cocked a saucy eye at Hazel, and flew up into the air a few yards, but it soon appeared that fear had little to do with this movement; for, after an airy circle or two, he fanned Hazel's cheek with his fast-flapping wings, and lighted on the very edge of the baler, and was for sipping.

"O, look here, Welch!" cried Hazel, in an ecstasy of delight.

"Ay, sir," said he. "Poor things, they han't a sound us out yet."

The talking puzzled the bird, if it did not alarm him, and he flew up to the nearest tree, and, perching there, inspected these new and noisy bipeds at his leisure.

Hazel now laid his hand on Welch's shoulder and reminded him gently they had a sad duty to perform, which could not be postponed.

"Right you are, sir," said Welch, "and very kind of you to let me have my way with him. Poor Sam!"

"I have found a place," said Hazel, in a low voice. "We can take the boat close to it. But where is Miss Rolleston?"

"O, she is not far off; she was here just now, and brought me this here little cocoa-nut, and patted me on the back, she did, then off again on a cruise. Bless her little heart!"

Hazel and Welch then got into the boat, and pushed off without much difficulty, and punted across the bay to one of those clefts we have indicated. It was now nearly high water, and they moored the boat close under the cleft Hazel had selected.

Then they both got out and went up to the extremity of the cleft, and there, with the axe and with pieces of wood, they scraped out a resting-place for Cooper. This was light work; for it was all stones, shells, fragments of coral, and dried sea-weed, lying loosely together. But now came a hard task in which Welch could not assist. Hazel unshipped a thwart, and laid the body on it: then by a great effort staggered with the burden up to the grave and deposited it. He was exhausted by the exertion, and had to sit down panting for some time. As soon as he was recovered, he told Welch to stand at the head of the grave, and he stood at the foot, bareheaded, and then, from memory, he repeated the service of our church, hardly missing or displacing a word.

This was no tame recital; the scene, the circumstances, the very absence of the book, made it tender and solemn. And then Welch repeated those beautiful words after Hazel, and Hazel let him. And how did he repeat them? In such a hearty loving tone, as became one who was about to follow, and all this but a short leave-taking. So uttered, for the living as well as the dead, those immortal words had a strange significance and beauty.

And presently a tender silvery voice came down to mingle with the deep and solemn tones of the male mourners. It was Helen Rolleston. She had watched most of their movements unseen herself, and now, standing at the edge of the ravine, and looking down on them, uttered a soft but thrilling amen to every prayer. When it was over, and the men prepared to fill in the grave she spoke to Welch in an

undertone, and begged leave to pay her tribute first; and with this, she detached her apron, and held it out to them. Hazel easily climbed up to her, and found her apron was full of sweet-smelling bark and aromatic leaves, whose fragrance filled the air.

"I want you to strew these over his poor remains," she said. "O, not common earth! He saved our lives. And his last words were, 'I love you, Tom.' O dear, O dear, O dear!" And with that she gave him the apron, and turned her head away to hide her tears.

Hazel blessed her for the thought, which, indeed, none but a lady would have had; and Welch and he, with the tears in their eyes, strewed the spicy leaves first; and soon a ridge of shingle neatly bound with sea-weed marked the sailor's grave.

Hazel's next anxiety, and that a pressing one, was to provide shelter for the delicate girl and the sick man, whom circumstances had placed under his care. He told Miss Rolleston Welch and he were going to cross the bay again, and would she be good enough to meet them at the bend of the river where she would find four trees? She nodded her head and took that road accordingly. Hazel rowed eastward across the bay, and it being now high water, he got the boat into the river itself near the edge of the shore, and, as this river had worn a channel, he contrived with the boat-hook to propel the boat up the stream, to an angle in the bank within forty yards of the four trees. He could get no farther, the stream being now not only shallow, but blocked here and there with great and rough fragments of stone. Hazel pushed the boat into the angle out of the current, and moored her fast. He and Welch then got ashore, and Miss Rolleston was standing at the four trees. He went to her and said enthusiastically, "This is to be your house. Is it not a beautiful site?"

"Yes, it is a beautiful site, but — forgive me — I really don't see the house," was her reply.

"But you see the framework."

Helen looked all about, and then said, ruefully, "I suppose I am blind, sir, or else you are dreaming, for I see nothing at all."

"Why here's a roof ready made, and the frame of a wall. We have only to wattle a screen between these four uprights."

"Only to wattle a screen! But I don't know what wattle a screen is. Who does?"

"Why you get some of the canes that grow a little farther up the river, and a certain long wiry grass I have marked down, and then you fix and weave till you make a screen from tree to tree; this could be patched with wet clay; I know where there is plenty of that. Meantime see what is done to our hands. The crown of this great palm-tree lies at the southern aperture of your house, and blocks it entirely up: that will keep off the only cold wind, the south wind, from you to-night. Then look at these long, spiky leaves interlaced over your head. (These trees are screw-pines.) There is a roof ready made. You must have another roof underneath that, but it will do for a day or two."

"But you will wattle the screen directly," said Helen. "Begin at once, please. I am anxious to see a screen wattleed."

"Well," said Welch, who had joined them, "landsmen are queer folk, the best of 'em. Why, miss, it would take him a week to screen you with rushes and reeds, and them sort of weeds; and I'd

do it in half an hour, if I was the Tom Welch I used to be. Why, there's spare canvas enough in the boat to go between these four trees breast high, and then there's the foresel besides; the mainsel is all you and me shall want, sir."

"O, excuse me," said Miss Rolleston, "I will not be sheltered at the expense of my friends."

"Welch, you are a trump," said Hazel, and ran off for the spare canvas. He brought it, and the carpenter's basket of tools. They went to work, and Miss Rolleston insisted on taking part in it. Finding her so disposed, Hazel said that they had better divide their labors since the time was short. Accordingly he took the axe and chopped off a great many scales of the palm-tree and lighted a great fire between the trees, while the other two worked on the canvas.

"This is to dry the soil as well as cook our provisions," said he; "and now I must go and find food. Is there anything you fancy?" He turned his head from the fire he was lighting and addressed this question both to Welch and Miss Rolleston.

Miss Rolleston stared at this question, then smiled, and, in the true spirit of a lady, said, "I think I should like a good large cocoa-nut, if you can find one." She felt sure there was no other eatable thing in the whole island.

"I want a cabbage," said Welch, in a loud voice.

"O, Mr. Welch, we are not at home," said Miss Rolleston, blushing at the preposterous demand.

"No, miss, in Capericorn. Whereby we shan't have to pay nothing for this here cabbage. I'll tell ye, miss: when a sailor comes ashore he always goes in for green vegetables, for why, he has eaten so much junk and biscuit, nature sings out for greens. Me and my shipmates was paid off at Portsmouth last year, and six of us agreed to dine together and each order his dish. Bleat if six boiled legs of mutton did not come up smoking hot; three was with cabbage, and three with turnmots. Mine was with turnmots. But then I don't ask, so nigh the Line: don't ye go to think, because I'm sick, and the lady and you is so kind to me, and to him that is a-waiting outside them there shoals for me, as I'm onreasonable; turnmots I wish you both and plenty of 'em, when some whaler gets driven out of her course and picks you up, and carries you into northern latitudes where turnmots grow; but cabbage is my right, cabbage is my due, being paid off in a manner; for the ship is foundered and I'm ashore: cabbage I ask for, as a seaman that has done his duty, and a man that won't live to eat many more of 'em; and" (losing his temper), "if you are the man I take you for, you'll run and fetch me a cabbage fresh from the tree" (recovering his temper). "I know I did n't ought to ax a parson to shin up a tree for me: but, Lord bless you, there ain't no sarcey little boys a-looking on, and here's a poor fellow mostly dying for it."

Miss Rolleston looked at Mr. Hazel with alarm in every feature; and whispered, "Cabbage from the tree. Is he wandering?"

Hazel smiled. "No," said he. "He has picked up a fable of these seas, that there is a tree which grows cabbages."

Welch heard him and said, with due warmth, "Of course there is a tree on all these islands, that grows cabbages; that was known a hundred years before you was born, and shipmates of mine have eaten them."

"Excuse me, what those old Admirals and Buccaneers, that set the legend afloat, were so absurd

as to call a cabbage, and your shipmates may have eaten for one, is nothing on earth but the last year's growth of the palm-tree."

"Palm-tree be—" said Welch; and thereupon ensued a hot argument, which Helen's good sense cut short.

"Mr. Hazel," said she, "can you by any possibility get our poor friend the *thing* he wants?"

"O, *that* is quite within the bounds of possibility," said Hazel, dryly.

"Well, then, suppose you begin by getting him the *thing*. Then I will boil the *thing*, and he will eat the *thing*; and after all that, it will be time to argue about the *name* we shall give to the *thing*."

The good sense of this struck Mr. Hazel forcibly. He started off at once, armed with the axe, and a net bag Welch had made since he became unfit for heavy labor: he called back to them as he went, to put the pots on.

Welch and Miss Rolleston complied; and then the sailor showed the lady how to sew sailor-wise, driving the large needle with the palm of the hand, guarded by a piece of leather. They had nailed two breadths of canvas to the trees on the north and west sides, and run the breadths rapidly together; and the water was boiling and bubbling in the balers, when Miss Rolleston uttered a scream, for Hazel came running over the prostrate palm-tree as if it was a proper bridge, and lighted in the midst of them.

"Lot one," said he, cheerfully, and produced from his net some limes, two cocoa-nuts, and a land-turtle; from this last esculent Miss Rolleston withdrew with undisguised horror, and it was in vain he assured her it was a great delicacy.

"No matter: it is a reptile. O, please send it away."

"The Queen of the Island reprimands you," said he, and put down the terrapin, which went off very leisurely for a reprimanded reptile.

Then Hazel produced a fine bream, which he had found struggling in a rock-pool, the tide having turned, and three sea cray-fish, bigger than any lobster. He chopped their heads off outside, and threw their tails into the pots; he stuck a piece of pointed wood through the bream, and gave it to Welch to toast; but Welch waved it aside.

"I see no cabbage," said he, grimly.

"O, I forgot: but that is soon found," said Hazel. "Here, give me the fish, and you take the saw, and examine the head of this palm-tree, which lies at Miss Rolleston's door. Saw away the succulent part of last year's growth, and bring it here."

Welch got up slowly.

"I'll go with you, Mr. Welch," said Miss Rolleston.

She will not be alone with me for a moment, if she can help it, thought Hazel, and sat moody by the fire. But he shook off his sadness, and forced on a cheerful look the moment they came back. They brought with them a vegetable very like the heart of a cabbage, only longer and whiter.

"There," said Welch, "what d'ye call that?"

"The last year's growth of the palm," said Hazel, calmly.

This vegetable was cut in two and put into the pots.

"There, take the toasting-fork again," said Hazel to Welch, and drew out from his net three huge scallop-shells. "Soup-plates," said he, and washed them in the running stream: then put them before the fire to dry.

While the fish and vegetable were cooking, he went and cut off some of the leafy, pinnated branches of the palm-tree, and fastened them horizontally above the strips of canvas. Each palm-branch traversed a whole side of the bower. This closed the northern and western sides.

On the southern side, the prostrate palm-tree, on striking the ground, had so crushed its boughs and leaves together, as to make a thick wall of foliage.

Then he took to making forks; and primitive ones they were. He selected a bough the size of a thick walking-stick; sawed it off the tree; sawed a piece six inches long off it, peeled that, split it in four, and, with his knife, gave each piece three points, by merely tapering off and serrating one end; and so he made a fork a minute. Then he brought all the rugs and things from the boat, and, the ground being now thoroughly dried by the fire, placed them for seats; gave each person a large leaf for a plate, besides a scallop-shell; and served out supper. It was eaten with rare appetite; the palm-tree vegetable in particular was delicious, tasting between a cabbage and a cocoa-nut.

When they had supped, Hazel removed the plates and went to the boat. He returned, dragging the foremast and foresail, which were small, and called Welch out. They agreed to rig the mainsail tarpaulin-wise and sleep in the boat. Accordingly they made themselves very busy screening the east side of Miss Rolleston's new abode with the foresail, and fastened a loop and drove a nail into the tree, and looped the sail to it, then suddenly bade her good night in cheerful tones, and were gone in a moment, leaving her to her repose as they imagined. Hazel, in particular, having used all his ingenuity to secure her personal comfort, was now too bent on showing her the most delicate respect and forbearance to think of anything else. But, justly counting on the delicacy, he had forgotten the timidity, of her sex, and her first night in the island was a terribly trying one.

Thrice she opened her mouth to call Welch and Hazel back, but could not. Yet, when their footsteps were out of hearing, she would have given the world to have them between her and the perils with which she felt herself surrounded.

Tigers; Snakes; Scorpions; Savages! what would become of her during the long night?

She sat and cowered before the hot embers. She listened to what seemed the angry roar of the sea. What with the stillness of the night and her sharpened senses she heard it all round the island. She seemed environed with peril, and yet surrounded by desolation. No one at hand to save her in time from a wild beast. No one anywhere near except a sick sailor, and one she would almost rather die than call singly to her aid, for he had once told her he loved her.

"O papa! O Arthur!" she cried, "are you praying for your poor Helen?" Then she wept and prayed; and half nerved herself to bear the worst. Finally, her vague fears completely overmastered her. Then she had recourse to a stratagem that belongs to her sex,—she hid herself from the danger, and the danger from her: she covered herself face and all, and so lay trembling, and longing for the day.

At the first streak of dawn she fled from her place of torture, and after plunging her face and hands in the river, which did her a world of good, she went off, and entered the jungle, and searched it closely, so far as she could penetrate it. Soon

she heard "Miss Rolleston" called in anxious tones. But she tossed her little head, and revenged herself for her night of agony by not replying.

However, Nature took her in hand; imperious hunger drew her back to her late place of torture; and there she found a fire, and Hazel cooking cray-fish. She ate the cray-fish heartily, and drank cocoa-nut milk out of half a cocoa-nut, which the ingenious Hazel had already sawn, polished, and mounted for her.

After that, Hazel's whole day was occupied in stripping a tree that stood on the high western promontory of the bay, and building up the materials of a bonfire a few yards from it, that if any whaler should stray that way, they might not be at a loss for means to attract her attention.

Welch was very ill all day, and Miss Rolleston nursed him. He got about towards evening, and Miss Rolleston asked him, rather timidly, if he could put her up a bell-rope.

"Why, yes, miss," said Welch, "that is easy enough; but I don't see no bell."

O, she did not want a bell,—she only wanted a bell-rope.

Hazel came up during this conversation, and she then gave her reason.

"Because, then, if Mr. Welch is ill in the night, and wants me, I could come to him. Or—" finding herself getting near the real reason she stopped short.

"Or what?" inquired Hazel, eagerly.

She replied to Welch. "When tigers and Things come to me, I can let you know, Mr. Welch, if you have any curiosity about the result of their visit."

"Tigers!" said Hazel, in answer to this side slap; "there are no tigers here; no large animals of prey exist in the Pacific."

"What makes you think that?"

"It is notorious: naturalists are agreed."

"But I am not. I heard noises all night. And little I expected that anything of me would be left this morning, except, *perhaps*, my back hair. Mr. Welch, you are clever at rigging things,—that is what you call it,—and so please rig me a bell-rope, then I shall not be eaten alive without creating some little disturbance."

"I'll do it, miss," said Welch, "this very night."

Hazel said nothing, but pondered. Accordingly, that very evening a piece of stout twine, with a stone at the end of it, hung down from the roof of Helen's house; and this twine clove the air, until it reached a ring upon the mainmast of the cutter; thence it descended, and was to be made fast to something or somebody. The young lady inquired no further. The very sight of this bell-rope was a great comfort to her; it reunited her to civilized life.

That night she lay down, and quaked considerably less. Yet she woke several times; and an hour before daylight she heard distinctly a noise that made her flesh creep. It was like the snoring of some great animals. This horrible sound was faint and distant; but she heard it between the roll of the waves, and that showed it was not the sea roaring; she hid herself in her rugs, and cowered till day-break. A score of times she was minded to pull her bell-rope; but always a womanly feeling, strong as her love of life, withheld her. "Time to pull that bell-rope when the danger was present or imminent," she thought to herself. "The Thing will come smelling about before it attacks me, and then I will pull the bell"; and so she passed an hour of agony.

Next morning, at daybreak, Hazel met her just issuing from her hut, and pointing to his net told her he was going to forage; and would she be good enough to make the fire and have boiling water ready: he was sorry to trouble her; but poor Welch was worse this morning. Miss Rolleston cut short his excuses. "Pray do not take me for a child; of course I will light the fire, and boil the water. Only I have no lucifer matches."

"Here are two," said he. "I carry the box, wrapped in oil-skin: for if anything happen to them, Heaven help us."

He crossed the prostrate palm-tree, and dived into the wood. It was a large beautiful wood, and except at the western edge, the trees were all of the palm-tree genus, but contained several species, including the cocoa-nut tree. The turf ran under these trees for about forty yards and then died gradually away under the same thick shade which destroyed all other vegetation in this wood, and made it so easy to see and travel.

He gathered a few cocoa-nuts that had burst out of their ripe pods and fallen to the ground; and ran on till he reached a belt of trees and shrubs, that bounded the palm forest. Here his progress was no longer easy: but he found trees covered with a small fruit resembling quinces in every particular, of look, taste, and smell, and that made him persevere, since it was most important to learn the useful products of the island. Presently he burst through some brushwood into a swampy bottom surrounded by low trees, and instantly a dozen large birds of the Osprey kind rose flapping into the air like windmills rising. He was quite startled by the whirring and flapping, and not a little amazed at the appearance of the place. Here was a very charnel-house; so thick lay the shells, skeletons, and loose bones of fish. Here too he found three terrapin killed but not eaten: and also some fish, more or less pecked. "Aha! my worthy executioners, much obliged," said he: "you have saved me that job": and into the bag went the terrapin, and two plump fish, but slightly mutilated. Before he had gone many yards, back came the sailing wings, and the birds settled again before his eyes. The rest of the low wood was but thin, and he soon emerged upon the open country: but it was most unpromising; and fitter for geese than men: a vast sedge swamp with water in the middle, thin fringes of great fern-trees, and here and there a disconsolate tree like a weeping-willow, and at the end of this lake and swamp, which altogether formed a triangle, was a barren hill without a blade of vegetation on it, and a sort of jagged summit, volcanic! Hazel did not at all like the look of.

Somewhat dismayed at finding so large a slice of the island worthless, he returned through the wood, guiding himself due west by his pocket-compass, and so got down to the shore, where he found scallops and cray-fish in incredible abundance. Literally, he had only to go into the water and gather them. But "enough" is as good as "a feast." He ran to the pots with his miscellaneous bag, and was not received according to his deserts. Miss Rolleston told him, a little severely, the water had been boiling a long time. Then he produced his provender, by way of excuse.

"Tortoises again!" said she, and shuddered visibly.

But the quinces and cocoa-nuts were graciously received. Welch, however, cried out for cabbage

"What am I to do?" said Hazel. "For every such cabbage, a king must die."

"Goodness me!"

"A monarch of the grove."

"O, a King Log. Why, then down with them all, of course; sooner than dear Mr. Welch shall go without his cabbage."

He cast a look of admiration on her, which she avoided, and very soon his axe was heard ringing in the wood hard by. Then came a loud crash. Then another. Hazel came running with the cabbage, and a cocoa-pod. "There," said he, "and there are a hundred more about. Whilst you cook that for Welch, I will store them." Accordingly he returned to the wood with his net, and soon came back with five pods in it, each as big as a large pumpkin.

He chucked these one at a time across the river, and then went for more. It took him all the afternoon to get all the pods across the river. He was obliged to sit down and rest.

But a suggestion of Helen's soon set him to work again.

"You were kind enough to say you would store these for me. Could you not store them so as to wall out those terrible beasts with them?"

"What terrible beasts?"

"That roar so all night, and don't eat us, only because they have not found out we are here yet. But they will."

"I deny their existence," said Hazel. "But I'll wall them out all the same," said he.

"Pray do," said Helen. "Wall them out first, and disprove them afterwards; I shall be better able to believe they don't exist, when they are well walled out—much."

Hazel went to work, and with her assistance laid cocoa-pods two wide and three deep, outside the northern and western side of her leafy bower, and he promised to complete the walls by the same means in two days more.

They all then supped together, and, to oblige him, she ate a little of the terrapin, and when they parted for the night, she thanked him, and said, with a deep blush, "You have been a good friend to me—of late."

He colored high, and his eyes sparkled with delight; and she noticed, and almost wished she had kept her gratitude to herself.

That night, what with her bell-rope and her little bit of a wall, she was somewhat less timorous, and went to sleep early.

But even in sleep she was watchful, and she was awakened by a slight sound in the neighborhood of the boat.

She lay watching, but did not stir.

Presently she heard a footstep.

With a stifled cry she bounded up, and her first impulse was to rush out of the tent. But she conquered this, and gliding to the south side of her bower, she peered through the palm-leaves, and the first thing she saw, was the figure of a man standing between her and the boat.

She drew her breath hard. The outline of the man was somewhat indistinct. But it was not a savage: the man was clothed; and his stature betrayed him.

He stood still for some time. "He is listening to see if I am awake," said Helen, to herself.

The figure moved towards her bower.

Then all in a moment she became another woman. She did not rely on her bell-rope; she felt it

was fast to nothing that could help her. She looked round for no weapon; she trusted to herself. She drew herself hastily up, and folded her arms; her bosom panted, but her cheek never paled. Her modesty was alarmed; her blood was up, and life or death were nothing to her.

The footsteps came nearer; they stopped at her door; they went north; they came back south. They kept her in this high-wrought attitude for half an hour. Then they retired softly; and when they were gone, she gave way, and fell on her knees, and began to cry hysterically. Then she got calmer, and then she wondered and puzzled herself; but she slept no more that night.

In the morning she found that the fire was lighted on a sort of shelf close to the boat. Mr. Hazel had cut the shelf and lighted the fire there for Welch's sake, who had complained of cold in the night.

Whilst Hazel was gone for the cray-fish, Welch asked Helen to go for her prayer-book. She brought it directly, and turned the leaves to find the prayers for the sick. But she was soon undeceived as to his intention.

"Sam had it wrote down how the Proserpine was foundered, and I should like to lie alongside my messmate on that there paper, as well as in t' other place" (meaning the grave). "Begin as Sam did, that this is my last word."

"O, I hope not. O, Mr. Welch, pray do not leave me!"

"Well, well then, never mind that; but just put down as I heard Sam; and his dying words, that the parson took down, were the truth."

"I have written that."

"And that the two holes was on her port-side, and seven foot from her stern-post; and I say them very augers that is in our cutter made them holes. Set down that."

"It is down."

"Then I'll put my mark under it; and you are my witness."

Helen, anxious to please him in everything, showed him where to put his mark. He did so; and she signed her name as his witness.

"And now, Mr. Welch," said she, "do not you fret about the loss of the ship; you should rather think how good Providence has been to us in saving us three out of so many that sailed in that poor ship. That Wylie was a wicked man; but he is drowned, or starved, no doubt, and there is an end of him. You are alive, and we are all three to see Old England again. But to live, you must eat; and so now do pray make a good breakfast to-day. Tell me what you can fancy. A cabbage?"

"What, you own it is a cabbage?"

"Of course I do," said Helen, coaxing. "You must excuse Mr. Hazel; these learned men are so crotchety in some things, and go by books; but you and I go by our senses, and to us a cabbage is a cabbage, grow where it will. Will you have one?"

"No, miss, not this morning. What I wants this morning very bad, indeed, it is,—I wants a drink made of the sweet-smelling leaves, like as you strewed over my messmate,—the Lord in heaven bless you for it."

"O, Mr. Welch, that is a curious fancy; but you shall not ask me twice for anything; the jungle is full of them, and I'll fetch you some in five minutes. So you must boil the water."

She scudded away to the jungle, and soon returned with some aromatic leaves. Whilst they were infusing, Hazel came up, and on being in-

formed of Welch's fancy, made no opposition; but, on the contrary, said that such men had sometimes very happy inspirations. He tasted it, however, and said the smell was the best part of it in his opinion. He then put it aside to cool for the sick man's use.

They ate their usual breakfast, and then Welch sipped his spice tea, as he called it. Morning and afternoon he drank copious draughts of it, and seemed to get suddenly better, and told them not to hang about him any longer; but go to their work: he was all right now.

To humor him they went off in different directions; Hazel with his axe to level cocoa-nut trees: and Helen to search for fruits in the jungle.

She came back in about an hour, very proud of some pods she had found with nutmegs inside them. She ran to Welch. He was not in the boat. She saw his waistcoat, however, folded and lying on the thwart: so she knew he could not be far off, and concluded he was in her bower. But he was not there; and she called to Mr. Hazel. He came to the side of the river laden with cocoa-nuts.

"Is he with you?" said Helen.

"Who? Welch? no."

"Well, then, he is not here. O dear! something is the matter."

Hazel came across directly. And they both began to run anxiously to every part whence they could command a view to any distance.

They could not see him anywhere, and met, with blank faces, at the bower.

Then Helen made a discovery.

This very day, while hanging about the place, Hazel had torn up from the edge of the river an old trunk, whose roots had been loosened by the water washing away the earth that held them, and this stump he had set up in her bower for a table, after sawing the roots down into legs. Well, on the smooth part of this table, lay a little pile of money, a ring with a large pearl in it, and two gold earrings, Helen had often noticed in Welch's ears.

She pointed at these and turned pale. Then suddenly waving her hand to Hazel to follow her, she darted out of the bower, and, in a moment, she was at the boat.

There she found, beside his waistcoat, his knife, and a little pile of money, placed carefully on the thwart; and, underneath it, his jacket rolled up, and his shoes and sailor's cap, all put neatly and in order.

Hazel found her looking at them. He began to have vague misgivings. "What does this mean?" he said, faintly.

"What does it mean!" cried Helen, in agony.

"Don't you see? A Legacy! The poor thing has divided his little all. O, my heart! What has become of him? Then, with one of those inspirations her sex have, she cried, "Ah! Cooper's grave!"

Hazel, though not so quick as she was, caught her meaning at a word, and flew down the slope to the sea-shore. The tide was out: a long irregular track of footsteps indented the sand. He stopped a moment and looked at them. They pointed towards that cleft where the grave was. He followed them all across the sand. They entered the cleft, and did not return. Full of heavy foreboding he rushed into the cleft.

Yes; his arms hanging on each side of the grave, and his cheek laid gently on it, there lay Tom Welch, with a loving smile on his dead face. Only a man; yet faithful as a dog.

Hazel went back slowly, and crying. Of all men living, he could best appreciate Fidelity, and mourn its fate.

But, as he drew near Helen, he dried his eyes; for it was his duty to comfort her.

She had at first endeavored to follow him; but after a few steps her knees smote together, and she was fain to sit down on the grassy slope that overlooked the sea.

The sun was setting huge and red over that vast and peaceful sea.

She put her hands to her head, and, sick at heart, looked heavily at that glorious and peaceful sight. Hazel came up to her. She looked at his face, and that look was enough for her. She rocked herself gently to and fro.

"Yes," said he in a broken voice: "He was there, — quite dead."

He sat gently down by her side, and looked at that setting sun and illimitable ocean and his heart felt deadly sad. "He is gone, — and we are alone, — on this island."

The man said this in one sense only: but the woman heard it in more than one.

ALONE!

She glanced timidly round at him, and, without rising, edged a little away from him, and wept in silence.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AFTER a long silence, Hazel asked her in a low voice if she could be there in half an hour. She said yes, in the same tone, but without turning her head. On reaching the graves, she found that Hazel had spared her a sad sight; nothing remained but to perform the service. When it was over she went slowly away in deep distress on more accounts than one. In due course Hazel came to her bower, but she was not there. Then he lighted the fire, and prepared everything for supper; and he was so busy, and her foot so light, he did not hear her come. But, by and by, lifting his head, he saw her looking wistfully at him, as if she would read his soul in his minutest actions. He started and brightened all over with pleasure at the sudden sight of her, and said eagerly, "Your supper is quite ready."

"Thank you, sir," said she, sadly and coldly (she had noted that expression of joy), "I have no appetite; do not wait for me." And soon after strolled away again.

Hazel was dumbfounded. There was no mistaking her manner; it was chilly and reserved all of a sudden. It wounded him; but he behaved like a man; what! I keep her out of her own house, do I? said he to himself. He started up, took a fish out of the pot, wrapped it in a leaf, and stalked off to his boat. Then he ate a little of the fish, threw the rest away, and went down upon the sands, and paced them in a sad and bitter mood.

But the night calmed him, and some hours of tranquil thought brought him fortitude, patience, and a clearer understanding. He went to his boat, elevated by generous and delicate resolutions. Now worthy resolves are tranquillizing, and he slept profoundly.

Not so she, whose sudden but very natural change of demeanor had hurt him. When she returned and found he was gone for the night, she began to be alarmed at having offended him.

For this and other reasons she paced the night in

sore perplexity, and did not sleep till morning; and so she overslept her usual time. However, when she was up, she determined to find her own breakfast; she felt it would not do to be too dependent, and on a person of uncertain humor; such for the moment she chose to pretend to herself was Hazel. Accordingly she went down to the sea to look for crayfish. She found abundance. There they lay in the water; you had but to stoop and pick them up.

But alas! they were black, lively, viperish; she went with no great relish for the task to take one up; it wriggled maliciously: she dropped it, and at that very moment, by a curious coincidence, remembered she was sick and tired of crayfish; she would breakfast on fruits. She crossed the sand, took off her shoes, and paddled through the river, and, having put on her shoes again, was about to walk up through some rank grass to the big wood, when she heard a voice behind her, and it was Mr. Hazel. She bit her lip (it was broad daylight now), and prepared quietly to discourage this excessive assiduity. He came up to her panting a little, and taking off his hat, said, with marked respect, "I beg your pardon, Miss Rolleston, but I know you hate reptiles; now there are a few snakes in that long grass; not poisonous ones."

"Snakes!" cried Helen; "let me get home: there, — I'll go without my breakfast."

"Oh, I hope not," said Hazel, ruefully; "why, I have been rather fortunate this morning, and it is all ready."

"That is a different thing," said Helen, graciously; "you must not have your trouble for nothing, I suppose."

Directly after breakfast, Hazel took his axe and some rope from the boat, and went off in a great hurry to the jungle. In half an hour or so he returned, dragging a large conical shrub, armed with spikes for leaves, incredibly dense and prickly.

"There," said he, "there's a vegetable porcupine for you. This is your best defence against that roaring Bugbear."

"That little tree!" said Helen; "the tiger would soon jump over that."

"Ay, but not over this and sixty more; a wall of stilettos. Don't touch it, please."

He worked very hard all day, and brought twelve of these prickly trees to the bower by sunset. He was very dissatisfied with his day's work; seemed quite mortified.

"This comes of beginning at the wrong end," he said; "I went to work like a fool. I should have begun by making a cart."

"But you can't do that," said Helen, soothingly; "no gentleman can make a cart."

"O, surely anybody can make a cart, by a little thinking," said he.

"I wish," said Helen, listlessly, "you would think of something for me to do; I begin to be ashamed of not helping."

"Hum! you can plait?"

"Yes, as far as seven strands."

"Then you need never be unemployed. We want ropes, and shall want large mats for the rainy weather."

He went to the place where he had warned her of the snakes, and cut a great bundle of long silky grass, surprisingly tough, yet neither harsh nor juicy, he brought it her, and said he should be very glad of a hundred yards of light cord, three ply and five ply.

She was charmed with the grass, and the very next morning she came to breakfast with it nicely prepared, and a good deal of cord made and hanging round her neck. She found some preparations for carpenters' work lying about.

"Is that great log for the cart?" said she.

"Yes! it is a section of a sago-tree."

"What, our sago?"

"The basis. See, in the centre it is all soft pith."

He got from the boat one of the augers that had scuttled the Proserpine, and soon turned the pith out. "They pound that pith in water, and run it through linen; then set the water in the sun to evaporate. The sediment is the sago of commerce, and sad inapud stuff it is."

"O, please don't call anything names one has eaten in England," said Helen, sorrowfully.

After a hasty meal, she and Mr. Hazel worked for a wager. Her taper fingers went like the wind, and though she watched him, and asked questions, she never stopped plaiting. Mr. Hazel was no carpenter, he was merely Brains spurred by Necessity. He went to work and sawed off four short discs of the sago-log.

"Now what are those, pray?" asked Helen.

"The wheels: primeval wheels. And here are the linchpins, made of hard wood; I watted them at odd times."

He then produced two young lime-trees he had rooted up that morning, and sawed them into poles in a minute. Then he bore two holes in each pole, about four inches from either extremity, and fitted his linchpins; then he drew out his linchpins, passed each pole first through one disc, and then through another, and fastened his linchpins. Then he ran to the boat, and came back with the stern and midship thwarts. He drilled with his centre-bit three rows of holes in these, two inches from the edge: and now Helen's work came in; her grass rope bound the thwarts tight to the horizontal poles leaving the discs room to play easily between the thwarts and the linchpins; but there was an open space thirteen inches broad between the thwarts; this space Hazel herring-boned over with some of Helen's rope drawn as tight as possible. The cart was now made. Time occupied in its production, three hours and forty minutes.

The coachmaker was very hot: and Helen asked him timidly whether he had not better rest and eat. "No time for that," said he. "The day is not half long enough for what I have to do." He drank copiously from the stream; put the carpenter's basket into the cart: got the tow-rope from the boat and fastened it to the cart in this shape \wedge , putting himself in the centre. So now the coachmaker was the horse, and off they went, rattling and creaking, to the jungle.

Helen turned her stool and watched this pageant enter the jungle. She plaited on, but not so merrily. Hazel's companionship and bustling way somehow kept her spirits up.

But, whenever she was left alone, she gazed on the blank ocean, and her heart died within her. At last she strolled pensively towards the jungle, plaiting busily as she went, and hanging the rope round her neck as fast as she made it.

At the edge of the jungle she found Hazel in a difficulty. He had cut down a wagon-load of prickly trees and wanted to get all this mass of *noli me tangere* on to that wretched little cart, but had not rope enough to keep it together: she gave him plenty of new line, and partly by fastening a small

rope to the big rope, and so making the big rope a receptacle, partly by artful tying, they dragged home an incredible load. To be sure some of it draggled half along the ground: and came after, like a peacock's tail.

He made six trips, and then the sun was low; so he began to build. He raised a rampart of these prickly trees, a rampart three feet wide and eight feet high; but it only went round two sides and a half of the bower. So, then, he said he had failed again; and lay down worn out by fatigue.

Helen Rolleston, though dejected herself, could not help pitying him for his exhaustion in her service, and for his bleeding hands: she undertook the cooking, and urged him kindly to eat of every dish; and, when he rose to go, she thanked him with as much feeling as modesty for the great pains he had taken to lessen those fears of hers, which she saw he did not share.

These kind words more than repaid him. He went to his little den in a glow of spirits; and the next morning went off in a violent hurry, and, for once, seemed glad to get away from her.

"Poor Mr. Hazel," said she, softly, and watched him out of sight. Then she got her plait, and went to the high point where he had barked a tree; and looked far and wide for a sail. The air was wonderfully clear; the whole ocean seemed in sight: but all was blank.

A great awe fell upon her, and sickness of heart; and then first she began to fear she was out of the known world, and might die on that island; or never be found by the present generation: and this sickening fear lurked in her from that hour and led to consequences that will be related shortly.

She did not return for a long while, and, when she did, she found Hazel had completed her fortifications. He invited her to explore the western part of the island, but she declined.

"Thank you," said she; "not to-day; there is something to be done at home. I have been comparing my abode with yours, and the contrast makes me uncomfortable, if it does n't you. Oblige me by building yourself a house."

"What, in an afternoon?"

"Why not? you made a cart in a forenoon. How can I tell your limits? you are quite out of my poor little depth. Well, at all events, you must roof the boat, or something. Come, be good for once, and think a little of yourself. There, I'll sit by and — what shall I do whilst you are working to oblige me?"

"Make a fishing net of cocoa-nut fibre, four feet deep. Here's plenty of material all prepared."

"Why, Mr. Hazel, you must work in your sleep."

"No; but of course I am not idle when I am alone; and luckily I have made a spade out of hard wood at odd hours, or all the afternoon would go in making that."

"A spade! You are going to dig a hole in the ground and call it a house. That will not do for me."

"You will see," said Hazel.

The boat lay in a little triangular creek; the surrounding earth was alluvial clay; a sort of black cheesy mould, stiff, but kindly to work with the spade. Hazel cut and chiselled it out at a grand rate, and throwing it to the sides, raised, by degrees, two mud banks, one on each side the boat; and at last he dug so deep that he was enabled to draw the boat another yard inland.

As Helen sat by netting and forcing a smile now and then, though sad at heart, he was on his mettle,

and the mud walls he raised in four hours were really wonderful. He squared their inner sides with the spade. When he had done, the boat lay in a hollow, the walls of which, half natural, half artificial, were five feet above her gunwale, and, of course, eight feet above her bottom, in which Hazel used to lie at night. He then made another little wall at the boat's stern, and laid palm-branches over all, and a few huge banana-leaves from the jungle; got a dozen large stones out of the river, tied four yards-lengths of Helen's grass-ropes from stone to stone, and so passing the ropes over the roof, confined it, otherwise a sudden gust of wind might lift it.

"There," said he; "am I not as well off as you? — I, a great tough man. Abominable waste of time, I call it."

"Hum!" said Helen, doubtfully, "all this is very clever; but I doubt whether it will keep out much rain."

"More than yours will," said Hazel, "and that is a very serious thing. I am afraid you little know how serious. But, to-morrow, if you please, I will examine our resources, and lay our whole situation before you, and ask your advice. As to your Bugbear, let him roar his heart out, his reign is over. Will you not come and see your wooden walls?"

He then took Helen and showed her the tremendous nature of her fortification, and assured her that no beast of prey could face it, nor even smell at it with impunity. And, as to the door, here the defence was double and treble; but attached to four grass cords; two passed into the abode round each of the screw pine-trees at the east side, and were kept in their places by pegs driven into the trees.

"When you are up," said Hazel, "you pull these four cords steadily, and your four guards will draw back right and left, with all their bayonets, and you can come out."

Helen was very much pleased with this arrangement, and did not disguise her gratitude. She slept in peace and comfort that night. Hazel, too, profited by the mud walls and leafy roof she had compelled him to rear; for this night was colder, as it happened, than any preceding night since they came ashore. In the morning, Hazel saw a green turtle on the shore, which was unusual at that time of year. He ran and turned her, with some difficulty; then brought down his cart, cut off her head with a blow, and, in due course, dragged her up the slope. She weighed two hundred pounds. He showed Miss Rolleston the enormous shell, gave her a lecture on turtles, and especially on the four species known to South Sea navigators, — the trunk turtle, the logger-head, the green turtle, and the hawkbill, from which last, and not from any tortoise, he assured her came the tortoise-shell of commerce.

"And now," said he, "will you not give up, or suspend, your Reptile theory, and eat a little green turtle, the king of them all?"

"I think I must after all that," said she; and rather relished it.

That morning he kept his word, and laid their case before her.

He said: "We are here on an island that has probably been seen, and disregarded, by a few whalers, but is not known to navigators nor down on any chart. There is a wide range of vegetation, proving a delightful climate on the whole, and one particularly suited to you, whose lungs are delicate. But then, comparing the beds of the rivers with the

banks, a tremendous fall of rain is indicated. The rainy months (in these latitudes) are at hand, and if these rains catch us in our present condition, it will be a calamity. You have walls, but no roof to keep it out. I tremble when I think of it. This is my main anxiety. My next is about our sustenance during the rains: we have no stores under cover; no fuel; no provisions, but a few cocoa-nuts. We use two lucifer matches a day; and what is to become of us at that rate? In theory, fire can be got by rubbing two pieces of wood together; Selkirk is said to have so obtained it from pimento wood on Juan Fernandez; but, in fact, I believe, the art is confined to savages. I never met a civilized man who could do it, and I have questioned scores of voyagers. As for my weapons, they consist of a boat-hook and an axe; no gun, no harpoon, no bow, no lance. My tools are a blunt saw, a blunter axe, a wooden spade, two great augers, that I believe had a hand in bringing us here, but have not been any use to us since, a centre-bit, two planes, a hammer, a pair of pincers, two brad-awls, three gimlets, two scrapers, a plumb-lead and line, a large pair of scissors, and you have a small pair, two gauges, a screw-driver, five claspknives, a few screws and nails of various sizes, two small barrels, two bags, two tin bowls, two wooden bowls, and the shell of this turtle, and that is a very good soup tureen only we have no meat to make soup with."

"Well, sir," said Miss Rolleston, resignedly, "we can but kneel down and die."

"That would be cutting the gordian knot, indeed," said Hazel. "What, die to shirk a few difficulties? No. I propose an amendment to that. After the words kneel down, insert the words, 'and get up again, trusting in that merciful Providence which has saved us so far, but expects us to exert ourselves too.'"

"It is good and pious advice," said Helen, "and let us follow it this moment."

"Now, said Hazel, "I have three propositions to lay before you. 1st, That I hereby give up walking, and take to running; time is so precious. 2d, That we both work by night as well as day. 3d, That we each tell the other our principal wants, so that there may be four eyes on the lookout, as we go, instead of two."

"I consent," said Helen; "Pray what are your wants?"

"Iron, oil, salt, tar, a bellows, a pickaxe, planks, thread, nets, light matting for roofs, bricks, chimneys, pots, jars, glass, animal food, some variety of vegetable food, and so on. I'll write down the entire list for you."

"You will be puzzled to do that without ink or paper."

"Not in the least. I shall engrave it in alto relievo, make the words with pebbles on the turf just above high-water mark. Now tell me your wants."

"Well, I want — Impossibilities."

"Enumerate them."

"What is the use?"

"It is the method we have agreed upon."

"O, very well, then. I want — a sponge."

"Good. What next?"

"I have broken my comb."

"Good."

"I'm glad you think so. I want, — O, Mr Hazel, what is the use? — well, I should like a mattress to lie on."

"Hair or wool?"

"I don't care which. And it is a shame to ask you for either."

"Go on."

"I want a looking-glass."

"Great Heaven! What for?"

"O, never mind: I want one; and some more towels, and some soap, and a few hair-pins; and some elastic bands; and some pen, ink, and paper, to write my feelings down in this island for nobody ever to see."

When she began Hazel looked bright, but the list was like a wasp, its sting lay in its tail. However, he put a good face on it. "I'll try and get you all those things: only give me time. Do you know I am writing a dictionary on a novel method."

"That means on the sand."

"No; the work is suspended for the present. But two of the definitions in it are, — DIFFICULTIES, — things to be subdued; IMPOSSIBILITIES, — things to be trampled on."

"Well, subdue mine. Trample on — a sponge for me."

"That is just what I was going to do," said he; opened a claspknife and jumped coolly into the river.

Helen screamed faintly, but after all the water was only up to his knees.

He soon cut a large sponge off a piece of slimy rock, and held it up to her. "There," said he, "why, there are a score of them at your very door, and you never saw them?"

"O, excuse me, I did see them, and shuddered; I thought they were reptiles; dormant, and biding their time."

When he was out of the river again, she thought a little, and asked him whether *old* iron would be of any use to him.

"O, certainly," said he; "what do you know of any?"

"I think I saw some one day. I'll go and look for it."

She took the way of the shore; and he got his cart and spade, and went post-haste to his clay-pit.

He made a quantity of bricks, and brought them home, and put them to dry in the sun. He also cut great pieces of the turtle, and wrapped them in fresh banana-leaves, and enclosed them in clay. He then tried to make a large narrow-necked vessel, and failed utterly; so he made the clay into a great rude platter like a shallow milk-pan. Then he peeled the sago-log, off which he had cut his wheels, and rubbed it with turtle-fat, and using it as a form, produced two clay cylinders. These he set in the sun, with bricks round them to keep them from falling. Leaving all these to dry and set before he baked them, he went off to the marsh for fern-leaves. The soil being so damp the trees were covered with a brownish-red substance, scarce distinguishable from wool. This he had counted on. But he also found in the same neighborhood a long cypress-haired moss that seemed to him very promising. He made several trips, and raised quite a stack of fern-leaves. By this time the sun had operated on his thinner pottery; so he laid down six of his large thick tiles, and lighted a fire on them with dry banana-leaves, and cocoa-nut, etc., and such light combustibles, until he had heated and hardened the clay; then he put the ashes on one side, and swept the clay clean; then he put the fire on again, and made it hotter and hotter till the clay began to redden.

While he was thus occupied, Miss Rolleston came

from the jungle radiant, carrying vegetable treasures in her apron. First she produced some golden apples with reddish leaves.

"There," said she; "and they smell delicious"

Hazel eyed them keenly.

"You have not eaten any of them?"

"What! by myself?" said Helen.

"Thank Heaven!" said Hazel, turning pale. "These are the manchanilla, the poison apple of the Pacific."

"Poison!" said Helen, alarmed in her turn.

"Well, I don't know that they are poison; but travellers give them a very bad name. The birds never peck them; and I have read that even the leaves falling into still water have killed the fish. You will not eat anything here till you have shown it me, will you?" said he, imploringly.

"No, no," said Helen; and sat down with her hand to her heart a minute. "And I was so pleased when I found them," she said; "they reminded me of home. I wonder whether these are poison, too?" and she opened her apron wide, and showed him some long yellow pods, with red specks, something like a very large banana.

"Ah, that is a very different affair," said Hazel, delighted; "these are plantains, and the greatest find we have made yet. The fruit is meat, the wood is thread, and the leaf is shelter and clothes. The fruit is good raw, and better baked, as you shall see, and, I believe this is the first time the dinner and the dish were both baked together."

He cleared the now heated hearth, put the meat and fruit on it, then placed his great platter over it, and heaped fire round the platter, and light combustibles over it. Whilst this was going on, Helen took him to her bower, and showed him three rusty iron hoops, and a piece of rotten wood with a rusty nail, and the marks where others had been.

"There," said she; "that is all I could find."

"Why, it is a treasure," cried he; "you will see. I have found something, too."

He then showed her the vegetable wool and vegetable hair he had collected, and told her where they grew. She owned they were wonderful imitations, and would do as well as the real things; and ere they had done comparing notes, the platter and the dinner under it were both baked. Hazel removed the platter or milk-pan, and served the dinner in it.

If Hazel was inventive, Helen was skilful and quick at any kind of woman's work; and the following is the result of three weeks' work under his direction. She had made as follows:—

1. Thick mattress, stuffed with the vegetable hair and wool described above. The mattress was only two feet six inches wide; for Helen found that she never turned in bed now. She slept as she had never slept before. This mattress was made with plantain-leaves, sewed together with the thread furnished by the tree itself, and doubled at the edges.

2. A long shallow net four feet deep, — cocoa-fibre.

3. A great quantity of stout grass-rope, and light but close matting for the roof, and some cocoa-nut matting for the ground, and to go under the mattress. But Hazel instructed by her had learned to plait, — rather clumsily, — and he had a hand in the matting.

Hazel in the mean time heightened his own mud banks in the centre, and set up brick fireplaces with hearth and chimney, one on each side; and now did all the cooking; for he found the smoke

from wood made Miss Rolleston cough. He also made a number of pigeon-holes in his mud walls and lined them with clay. One of these he dried with fire, and made a pottery door to it, and there kept the lucifer-box. He made a vast number of bricks, but did nothing with them. After several failures he made two large pots, and two great pans, that would all four bear fire under them, and in the pans he boiled sea-water till it all evaporated and left him a sediment of salt. This was a great addition to their food, and he managed also to put by a little. But it was a slow process.

He made a huge pair of bellows, with a little assistance from Miss Rolleston; the spout was a sago stick, with the pith driven out, and the substitute for leather was the skin of a huge eel he found stranded at the east point.

Having got his bellows and fixed them to a post he drove into the ground, he took for his anvil a huge flint stone, and a smaller one for hammer; heated his old iron to a white heat, and hammered it with a world of trouble into straight lengths; and at last with a portion of it produced a long saw without teeth, but one side sharper than the other. This by repeated experiments of heating and immersing in water, he at last annealed; and when he wanted to saw, he blew his embers to a white heat (he kept the fire alive now night and day); heated his original saw red-hot, and soon sawed through the oleaginous woods of that island. If he wanted to cut down a tree in the jungle, he put the bellows and a pot of embers on his cart with other fuel, and came and lighted the fire under the tree and soon had it down. He made his pickaxe in half an hour, but with his eyes rather than his hands. He found a young tree growing on the rock, or at least on soil so shallow that the root was half above ground and at right angles to the stem. He got this tree up, shortened the stem, shaped the root, shod the point with some of his late old iron; and with this primitive tool, and a thick stake baked at the point, he opened the ground to receive twelve stout uprights, and he drove them with a tremendous mallet made upon what might be called the compendious or Hazelian method; it was a section of a hard tree with a thick shoot growing out of it, which shoot, being shortened, served for the handle. By these arts he at last saw a goal to his labors. Animal food, oil, pitch, ink, paper, were still wanting; but fish were abundant, and plantains and cocoa-nuts stored. Above all, Helen's hut was now weather-tight. Stout horizontal bars were let into the trees, and, being bound to the uprights, they mutually supported each other; smaller horizontal bars at intervals kept the prickly ramparts from being driven in by a sudden gust. The canvas walls were removed, and the nails stored in a pigeon-hole, and a stout network substituted, to which huge plantain-leaves were cunningly fastened with plantain-thread. The roof was double: first that extraordinary mass of spiked leaves which the four trees threw out, then several feet under that the huge piece of matting the pair had made. This was strengthened by double strips of canvas at the edges and in the centre, and by single strips in other parts. A great many cords and strings made of that wonderful grass was sewn to the canvas-strengthened edges, and so it was fastened to the trees, and fastened to the horizontal bars.

When this work drew close to its completion, Hazel could not disguise his satisfaction.

But he very soon had the mortification of seeing that she for whom it was all done did not share his complacency.

A change took place in her; she often let her work fall, and brooded. She spoke sometimes sharply to Mr. Hazel, and sometimes with strained civility. She wandered away from him, and from his labors for her comfort, and passed hours at Telegraph Point, eying the illimitable ocean. She was a Riddle. All sweetness at times, but at others irritable, moody, and scarce mistress of herself. Hazel was sorry and perplexed, and often expressed a fear she was ill. The answer was always in the negative. He did not press her, but worked on for her, hoping the mood would pass. And so it would no doubt, if the cause had not remained.

Matters were still in this uncomfortable and mysterious state when Hazel put his finishing stroke to her abode.

He was in high spirits that evening: for he had made a discovery; he had at last found time for walk, and followed the river to its source, a very remarkable lake in a hilly basin. Near this was a pond, the water of which he had tasted and found it highly bituminous; and making further research he had found at the bottom of a rocky ravine a very wonderful thing, a dark resinous fluid bubbling up in quite a fountain, which, however, fell down again as it rose, and hardly any overflowed. It was like thin pitch.

Of course, in another hour he was back there with a great pot, and half filled it. It was not like water: it did not bubble so high, when some had been taken: so he just took what he could get. Pursuing his researches a little farther he found a range of rocks with snowy summits apparently; but the snow was the guano of centuries. He got to the western extremity of the island, saw another deep bay or rather branch of the sea, and on the other side of it a tongue of high land running out to sea on that promontory stood a gigantic palm-tree. He recognized that with a certain thrill, but was in a great hurry to get home with his pot of pitch for it was in truth a very remarkable discovery though not without a parallel. He could not wait till morning, so with embers and cocoa-nut he made a fire in the bower, and melted his pitch which had become nearly solid, and proceeded to smear the inside of the matting in places, to make it thoroughly water-tight.

Helen treated the discovery at first with mortifying indifference: but he hoped she would appreciate Nature's bounty more when she saw the practical use of this extraordinary production. He endeavored to lead her to that view. She shook her head, sorrowfully. He persisted. She met him with silence. He thought this peevish, and ungrateful to Heaven; we have all different measures of the wonderful; and to him a fountain of pitch was a thing to admire greatly and thank God for: he said as much.

To Helen it was nasty stuff, and who cares where it came from. She conveyed as much by a shrug of the shoulders, and then gave a sigh that told her mind was far away.

He was a little mortified, and showed it.

One word led to another, and at last what had been long fermenting came out.

"Mr. Hazel," said she, "you and I are at cross purposes. You mean to live here. I do not."

Hazel left off working and looked greatly per-

plexed, the attack was so sudden in its form, though it had been a long time threatening. He found nothing to say, and she was impatient now to speak her mind, so she replied to his look.

"You are making yourself at home here. You are contented. Contented? You are happy in this horrible prison."

"And why not?" said Hazel. But he looked rather guilty. "Here are no traitors; no murderers. The animals are my friends, and the one human being I see makes me better to look at her."

"Mr. Hazel, I am in a state of mind, that romantic nonsense jars on me. Be honest with me, and talk to me like a man. I say that you beam all over with happiness and content, and that you—now answer me one question; why have you never lighted the bonfire on Telegraph Point?"

"Indeed I don't know," said he, submissively. "I have been so occupied."

"You have: and how? Not in trying to deliver us both from this dreadful situation, but to reconcile me to it. Yes sir, under pretence (that is a harsh word, but I can't help it) of keeping out the rain. Your rain is a Bugbear: it never rains, it never will rain. You are killing yourself almost to make me comfortable in this place. Comfortable?" She began to tremble all over with excitement long restrained. "And do you really suppose you can make me live on like this, by building me a nice hut. Do you think I am all body and no soul, that shelter and warmth and enough to eat can keep my heart from breaking, and my cheeks from blushing night and day. When I wake in the morning I find myself blushing to my fingers' ends." Then she walked away from him. Then she walked back. "O, my dear father, why did I ever leave you!" "Keep me here? make me live months and years on this island. Have you sisters? Have you a mother? Ask yourself, is it likely? No; if you will not help me, and they don't love me enough to come and find me and take me home, I'll go to another home without your help or any man's." Then she rose suddenly to her feet. "I'll tie my clothes tight round me, and fling myself down from that point on to the sharp rocks below. I'll find a way from this place to Heaven, if there's no way from it to those I love on earth."

Then she sank down and rocked herself and sobbed hard.

The strong passion of this hitherto gentle creature quite frightened her unhappy friend, who knew more of books than women. He longed to soothe her and comfort her; but what could he say. He cried out in despair, "My God, can I do nothing for her?"

She turned on him like lightning, "You can do anything: everything. You can restore us both to our friends. You can save my life, my reason. For that will go first, I think. What *had* I done? what *had* I ever done since I was born, to be so brought down? Was ever an English lady—? And then I have such an irritation on my skin, all over me. I sometimes wish the tiger would come and tear me all to pieces; yes, all to pieces." And with that her white teeth clicked together convulsively. "Do!" said she, darting back to the point as swiftly as she had rushed away from it. "Why, put down that nasty stuff; and leave off inventing fifty little trumpery things for me, and do one great thing instead. O, do not fritter that great mind of yours away in painting and patching my prison; but bring it all to bear on getting me out of my

prison. Call sea and land to our rescue. Let them know a poor girl is here in unheard-of, unfathomable misery: here, in the middle of this awful ocean."

Hazel sighed deeply. "No ships seem to pass within sight of us," he muttered.

"What does that matter to you? You are not a common man; you are an inventor. Rouse all the powers of your mind. There must be some way. Think for me. THINK! THINK! or my blood will be on your head."

Hazel turned pale and put his head in his hands, and tried to think.

She leaned towards him with great flashing eyes of purest hazel.

The problem dropped from his lips a syllable at a time. "To diffuse—intelligence—a hundred leagues from a fixed point—an island?"

She leaned towards him with flashing expectant eyes.

But he groaned, and said; "That seems impossible."

"Then trample on it," said she, bringing his own words against him; for she used to remember all he said to her in the day, and ponder it at night. "Trample on it, subdue it, or never speak to me again. Ah, I am an ungrateful wretch to speak so harshly to you. It is my misery, not me. Good, kind, Mr. Hazel, O pray, pray, pray bring all the powers of that great mind to bear on this one thing, and save a poor girl, to whom you have been so kind, so considerate, so noble, so delicate, so for bearing; now save me from despair."

Hysterical sobs cut her short here, and Hazel, whose loving heart she had almost torn out of his body, could only falter out in a broken voice, that he would obey her. "I'll work no more for you at present," said he, "sweet as it has been. I will think instead. I will go this moment beneath the stars and think all night."

The young woman was now leaning her head languidly back against one of the trees, weak as water after her passion. He cast a look of ineffable love and pity on her, and withdrew slowly to think beneath the tranquil stars.

Love has set men hard tasks in his time. Whether this was a light one, our reader shall decide.

TO DIFFUSE INTELLIGENCE FROM A FIXED ISLAND OVER A HUNDRED LEAGUES OF OCEAN

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE perplexity into which Hazel was thrown by the outburst of his companion, rendered him unable to reduce her demand at once to an intelligible form. For some moments he seriously employed his mind on the problem until it assumed this shape.

Firstly: I do not know where this island is, having no means of ascertaining either its latitude or longitude.

Secondly: If I had such a description of its locality, how might the news be conveyed beyond the limits of the place?

As the wildness of Helen's demand broke upon his mind, he smiled sadly, and sat down upon the bank of the little river, near his boat-house, and buried his head in his hands. A deep groan burst from him, and the tears at last came through his fingers, as in despair he thought how vain must be any effort to content or to conciliate her. Impati--

with his own weakness he started to his feet, when a hand was laid gently upon his arm. She stood beside him.

"Mr. Hazel," she said, hurriedly, — her voice was husky, — "do not mind what I have said. I am unreasonable; and I am sure I ought to feel obliged to you for all the —"

Hazel turned his face towards her, and the moon glistened on the tears that still flowed down his cheeks. He tried to check the utterance of her apology; but, ere he could master his voice, the girl's cold and constrained features seemed to melt. She turned away, wrung her hands, and with a sharp quivering cry, she broke forth, —

"O sir! O Mr. Hazel! do forgive me. I am not ungrateful, indeed, indeed, I am not; but I am mad with despair. Judge me with compassion. At this moment, those who are very very dear to me are awaiting my arrival in London; and when they learn the loss of the Proserpine, how great will be their misery! Well, that misery is added to mine. Then my poor papa: he will never know how much he loved me until this news reaches him. And to think that I am dead to them, yet living! living here helplessly, helplessly. Dear, dear, Arthur, how you will suffer for my sake. O papa, papa! shall I never see you again?" and she wept bitterly.

"I am helpless either to aid or to console you, Miss Rolleston. By the act of a Divine Providence you were cast upon this desolate shore, and by the same Will I was appointed to serve and to provide for your welfare. I pray God that He will give me health and strength to assist you. Good night."

She looked timidly at him for a moment, then slowly regained her hut. He had spoken coldly, and with dignity. She felt humbled, the more so, that he had only bowed his acknowledgment to her apology.

For more than an hour she watched him, as he paced up and down between the boat-house and the shore; then he advanced a little towards her shelter, and she shrank into her bed, after gently closing the door. In a few moments she crept again to peep forth, and to see if he were still there, but he had disappeared.

The following morning Helen was surprised to see the boat riding at anchor in the surf, and Hazel busily engaged on her trim. He was soon on shore, and by her side.

"I am afraid I must leave you for a day, Miss Rolleston," he said. "I wish to make a circuit of the island; indeed, I ought to have done so many days ago."

"Is such an expedition necessary? Surely you have had enough of the sea."

"It is very necessary. You have urged me to undertake this enterprise. You see, it is the first step towards announcing to all passing vessels our presence in this place. I have commenced operations already. See on yonder bluff, which I have called Telegraph Point, I have mounted the boat's ensign, and now it floats from the top of the tree beside the bonfire. I carried it there at sunrise. Do you see that pole I have shipped on board the boat? that is intended as a signal, which shall be exhibited on your great palm-tree. The flag will then stand for a signal on the northern coast, and the palm-tree, thus accoutred, will serve for a similar purpose on the western extremity of the island. As I pass along the southern and eastern shores, I propose to select spots where some mark

can be erected, such as may be visible to ships at sea."

"But will they remark such signals?"

"Be assured they will, if they come within sight of the place."

Hazel knew that there was little chance of such an event; but it was something not to be neglected. He also explained that it was necessary he should arrive at a knowledge of the island, the character of its shores; and from the sea he could rapidly obtain a plan of the place, ascertain what small rivers there might be, and, indeed, see much of its interior; for he judged it to be not more than ten miles in length, and scarce three in width.

Helen felt rather disappointed that no trace of the emotion he displayed on the previous night remained in his manner, or in the expression of his face. She bowed her permission to him rather haughtily, and sat down to breakfast on some baked yams, and some rough oysters, which he had raked up from the bay while bathing that morning. The young man had regained an elasticity of bearing, an independence of tone, to which she was not at all accustomed; his manners were always soft and deferential; but his expression was more firm, and she felt that the reins had been gently removed from her possession, and there was a will to guide her which she was bound to acknowledge and obey.

She did not argue in this wise, for it is not human to reason and to feel at the same moment. She felt then instinctively that the man was quietly asserting his superiority, and the child pouted.

Hazel went about his work briskly; the boat was soon laden with every requisite. Helen watched these preparations askance, vexed with the expedition which she had urged him to make. Then she fell to reflecting on the change that seemed to have taken place in her character; she, who was once so womanly, so firm, so reasonable, — why had she become so petulant, childish, and capricious?

The sail was set, and all ready to run the cutter into the surf of the rising tide, when, taking a sudden resolution, as it were, Helen came rapidly down, and said, "I will go with you, if you please," half in command and half in doubt. Hazel looked a little surprised, but very pleased; and then she added, "I hope I shall not be in your way."

He assured her, on the contrary, that she might be of great assistance to him; and now with doubled alacrity, he ran out the little vessel and leaped into the prow as she danced over the waves. He taught her how to bring the boat's head round with the help of an oar, and when all was snug, left her at the helm. On reaching the mouth of the bay, if it could so be called, he made her remark that it was closed by reefs, except to the north and to the west. The wind being southerly, he had decided to pass to the west, and so they opened the sea about half a mile from the shore.

For about three miles they perceived it consisted of a line of bluffs, cleft at intervals by small narrow bays, the precipitous sides of which were lined with dense foliage. Into these fissures the sea entered with a mournful sound, that died away as it crept up the yellow sands: with which these nooks were carpeted. An exclamation from Helen attracted his attention to the horizon on the northwest, where a long line of breakers glittered in the sun. A reef or low sandy bay appeared to exist in that direction, about fifteen miles away, and something more than a mile in length. As they proceeded, he marked

roughly on the side of his tin baler, with the point of a pin borrowed from Helen, the form of the coast line.

An hour and a half brought them to the north-western extremity of the island. As they cleared the shelter of the land, the southerly breeze coming with some force across the open sea caught the cutter, and she lay over in a way to inspire Helen with alarm; she was about to let go the tiller, when Hazel seized it, accidentally enclosing her hand under the grasp of his own, as he pressed the tiller hard to port.

"Steady, please; don't relinquish your hold; it is all right,—no fear," he cried, as he kept his eye on their sail.

He held this course for a mile or more, and then judging with a long tack he could weather the southerly side of the island, he put the boat about. He took occasion to explain to Helen how this operation was necessary, and she learned the alphabet of navigation. The western end of their little land now lay before them; it was about three miles in breadth. For two miles the bluff coast line continued unbroken; then a deep bay, a mile in width and two miles in depth, was made by a long tongue of sand projecting westerly; on its extremity grew the gigantic palm, well recognized as Helen's landmark. Hazel stood up in the boat to reconnoitre the coast. He perceived the sandy shore was dotted with multitudes of dark objects. Ere long, these objects were seen to be in motion, and, pointing them out to Helen, with a smile, he said,—

"Beware, Miss Rolleston, yonder are your bugbears,—and in some force, too. Those dark masses, moving upon the hillocks of sand, or rolling on the surf, are sea-lions,—the *phoca leonina*, or lion-seal."

Helen strained her eyes to distinguish the forms, but only descried the dingy objects. While thus engaged, she allowed the cutter to fall off a little, and, ere Hazel had resumed his hold upon the tiller, they were fairly in the bay; the great palm-tree on their starboard-bow.

"You seem determined to make the acquaintance of your nightmares," he remarked; "you perceive that we are embayed."

Her consternation amused him; she saw that if they held their present course, the cutter would take the berth about a mile ahead, where these animals were densely crowded.

At this moment, something dark bulged up close beside her in the sea, and the rounded back of a monster rolled over and disappeared. Hazel let drop the sail, for they were now fairly in the smooth water of the bay, and close to the sandy spit, the gigantic stem of the palm-tree was on their quarter, about half a mile off.

He took to the oars, and rowed slowly towards the shore. A small seal rose behind the boat and followed them, playing with the blade, its gambols resembling that of a kitten. He pointed out to Helen the mild expression of the creature's face, and assured her that all this tribe were harmless animals, and susceptible of domestication. The cub swam up to the boat quite fearlessly, and he touched its head gently; he encouraged her to do the like, but she shrank from its contact. They were now close ashore, and Hazel, throwing out his anchor in two feet of water, prepared to land the beam of wood he had brought to decorate the palm-tree as a signal.

The huge stick was soon heaved overboard, and he leaped after it. He towed it to the nearest land-

ing to the tree, and dragged it high up on shore. Scarcely had he disposed it conveniently, intending to return in a day or two, with the means of affixing it in a prominent and remarkable manner, in the form of a spar across the trunk of the palm, when a cry from Helen recalled him. A large number of the sea-lions were coasting quietly down the surf towards the boat; indeed, a dozen of them had made their appearance around it.

Hazel shouted to her not to fear, and desiring that her alarm should not spread to the swarm, he passed back quietly but rapidly. When he reached the water, three or four of the animals were already floundering between him and the boat. He waded slowly towards one of them, and stood beside it. The man and the creature looked quietly at each other, and then the seal rolled over, with a snuffing, self-satisfied air, winking its soft eyes with immense complacency.

Helen, in her alarm, could not resist a smile at this conclusion of so terrible a demonstration; for, with all their gentle expression, the tusks of the brute looked formidable. But, when she saw Hazel pushing them aside, and patting a very small cub on the back, she recovered her courage completely.

Then he took to his oars again; and, aided by the tide, which was now on the ebb, he rowed round the southwestern extremity of the island. He found the water here, as he anticipated, very shallow.

It was midday when they were fairly on the southern coast; and now, sailing with the wind aft, the cutter ran through the water at racing speed. Fearing that some reefs or rocky formations might exist in their course, he reduced sail, and kept away from the shore, about a mile. At this distance he was better able to see inland, and mark down the accident of its formation.

The southern coast was uniform, and Helen said it resembled the cliffs of the Kentish or Sussex coast of England, only the English white was here replaced by the pale volcanic gray. By one o'clock they came abreast the very spot where they had first made land; and, as they judged, due south of their residence. Had they landed here, a walk of three miles across the centre of the island would have brought them home.

For about a similar distance the coast exhibited monotonous cliffs unbroken even by a rill. It was plain that the water-shed of the island was all northward. They now approached the eastern end, where rose the circular mountain of which mention has been already made. This eminence had evidently at one time been detached from the rest of the land to which it was now joined by a neck of swamp about a mile and a half in breadth, and two miles in length.

Hazel proposed to reconnoitre this part of the shore nearly, and ran the boat close in to land. The reeds or canes with which this bog was densely clothed, grew in a dark spongy soil. Here and there this waste was dotted with ragged trees which he recognized as the cypress: from its gaunt branches hung a black, funeral kind of weeper, a kind of moss, resembling iron gray horsehair both in texture and uses, though not so long in the staple.

This parasite, Hazel explained to Helen, was very common in such marshy ground, and was the death-flag hung out by Nature to warn man that malaria and fever were the invisible and inalienable inhabitants of that fatal neighborhood.

Looking narrowly along the low shore for some good landing, where under shelter of a tree they might repose for an hour, and spread their midday repast, they discovered an opening in the reeds, a kind of lagoon or bayou, extending into the morass between the highlands of the island and the circular mountain, but close under the base of the latter. This inlet he proposed to explore, and accordingly the sail was taken down and the cutter was poled into the narrow creek. The water here was so shallow that the keel slid over the quicksand into which the oar sank freely. The creek soon became narrow, the water deeper, and of a blacker color, and the banks more densely covered with canes. These grew to the height of ten and twelve feet, and as close as wheat in a thick crop. The air felt dank and heavy, and hummed with myriads of insects. The black water became so deep and the bottom so sticky that Hazel took to the oars again. The creek narrowed as they proceeded, until it proved scarcely wide enough to admit of his working the boat. The height of the reeds hindered the view on either side. Suddenly, however, and after proceeding very slowly through the bends of the canal, they decreased in height and density, and they emerged into an open space of about five acres in extent, a kind of oasis in this reedy desert, created by a mossy mound which arose amidst the morass, and afforded firm footing, of which a grove of trees and innumerable shrubs availed themselves. Helen uttered an exclamation of delight as this island of foliage in a sea of reeds met her eyes, that had been famished with the arid monotony of the brake.

They soon landed.

Helen insisted on the preparations for their meal being left to her, and having selected a sheltered spot she was soon busy with their frugal food. Hazel surveyed the spot, and selecting a red cedar, was soon seated forty feet above her head; making a topographical survey of the neighborhood. He found that the bayou by which they had entered continued its course to the northern shore, thus cutting off the mountain or easterly end, and forming of it a separate island. He saw that a quarter of a mile farther on the bayou or canal parted, forming two streams, of which that to the left seemed the main channel. This he determined to follow. Turning to the west, that is towards their home, he saw at a distance of two miles a crest of hills broken into cliffs, which defined the limit of the mainland. The sea had at one time occupied the site where the morass now stood. These cliffs formed a range, extending from north to south: their precipitous sides clothed here and there with trees, marked where the descent was broken by platforms. Between him and this range the morass extended. Hazel took note of three places where the descent from these hills into the marsh could, he believed, most readily be made.

On the eastern side, and close above him arose the peculiar mountain. Its form was that of a truncated cone, and its sides densely covered with trees of some size.

The voice of Helen called him from his perch, and he descended quickly, leaping into a mass of brushwood growing at the foot of his tree. Helen stood a few yards from him, in admiration, before a large shrub.

"Look, Mr. Hazel, what a singular production," said the girl, as she stooped to examine the plant. It bore a number of red flowers, each growing out of a fruit like a prickly pear. These flowers were in

various stages some were just opening like tulips, others, more advanced, had expanded like umbrellas, and quite overlapped the fruit, keeping it from sun and dew; others had served their turn in this way, and been withered by the sun's rays. But wherever this was the case, the fruit had also burst open and displayed or discharged its contents, and those contents looked like seeds; but on narrower inspection proved to be little insects with pink transparent wings, and bodies of incredibly vivid crimson.

Hazel examined the fruit and flowers very carefully, and stood rapt, transfixed.

"It must be!—and it is!" said he, at last.

"Well, I'm glad I've not died without seeing it."

"What is it?" said she.

"One of the most valuable productions of the earth. It is cochineal. This is the Tunal-tree."

"O! indeed," said Helen, indifferently: "cochineal is used for a dye; but as it is not probable we shall require to dye anything, the discovery seems to me more curious than useful."

"You wanted some ink. This pigment, mixed with lime-juice, will form a beautiful red ink. Will you lend me your handkerchief and permit me to try if I have forgotten the method by which these little insects are obtained." He asked her to hold her handkerchief under a bough of the Tunal-tree, where the fruit was ripe. He then shook the bough. Some insects fell at once into the cloth. A great number rose and buzzed a little in the sun not a yard from where they were born; but the sun dried their blood so promptly that they soon fell dead in the handkerchief. Those that the sun so killed went through three phases of color before their eyes. They fell down black or nearly. They whitened on the cloth: and after that came gradually to their final color, a flaming crimson. The insect thus treated, appeared the most vivid of all.

They soon secured about half a tea-cup full; they were rolled up and put away, then they sat down and made a very hearty meal, for it was now past two o'clock. They re-entered the boat, and passing once more into the morass they found the channel of the bayou as it approached the northern shore less difficult of navigation. The bottom became sandy and hard, and the presence of trees in the swamp proved that spots of *terra firma* were more frequent. But the water shallower, and as they opened the shore, he saw with great vexation that the tide in receding had left the bar at the mouth of the canal visible in some parts. He pushed on, however, until the boat grounded. This was a sad affair. There lay the sea not fifty yards ahead. Hazel leaped out, and examined and forded the channel, which at this place was about two hundred feet wide. He found a narrow passage near the eastern side, and to this he towed the boat. Then he begged Miss Rolleston to land, and relieved the boat of the mast, sail, and oars. Thus lightened, he dragged her into the passage: but the time occupied in these preparations had been also occupied by Nature,—the tide had receded, and the cutter stuck immovably in the water-way, about six fathoms short of deeper water.

"What is to be done now?" inquired Helen, when Hazel returned to her side, panting, but cheerful.

"We must await the rising of the tide. I fear we are imprisoned here for three hours at least."

There was no help for it. Helen made light of the misfortune. The spot where they had landed

was enclosed between the two issues of the lagoon. They walked along the shore to the more easterly, and the narrower canal, and, on arriving, Hazel found to his great annoyance that there was ample water to have floated the cutter had he selected that, the least promising road. He suggested a return by the road they came, and, passing into the other canal, by that to reach the sea. They hurried back, but found by this time the tide had left the cutter high and dry on the sand. So they had no choice but to wait.

Having three hours to spare, Hazel asked Miss Rolleston's permission to ascend the mountain. She assented to remain near the boat while he was engaged in this expedition. The ascent was too rugged and steep for her powers, and the seashore and adjacent groves would find her ample amusement during his absence. She accompanied him to the bank of the smaller lagoon, which he forded, and waving an adieu to her he plunged into the dense wood with which the sides of the mountain were clothed.

She waited some time, and then she heard his voice shouting to her from the heights above. The mountain-top was about three quarters of a mile from where she stood, but seemed much nearer. She turned back towards the boat, walking slowly, but paused as a faint and distant cry again reached her ear. It was not repeated, and then she entered the grove.

The ground beneath her feet was soft with velvety moss, and the dark foliage of the trees rendered the air cool and deliciously fragrant. After wandering for some time, she regained the edge of the grove near the boat, and selecting a spot at the foot of an aged cypress, she sat down with her back against its trunk. Then she took out Arthur's letter, and began to read those impassioned sentences: as she read she sighed deeply, as earnestly she found herself pitying Arthur's condition more than she regretted her own. She fell into reverie, and from reverie into a drowsy languor. How long she remained in this state she could not remember, but a slight rustle overhead recalled her senses. Believing it to be a bird moving in the branches she was resigning herself again to rest when she became sensible of a strange emotion, a conviction that something was watching her with a fixed gaze. She cast her eyes around, but saw nothing. She looked upwards. From the tree immediately above her lap depended a snake, its tail coiled around a dead branch. The reptile hung straight, its eyes fixed like two rubies upon Helen's, as very slowly it let itself down by its uncoiling tail. Now its head was on a level with hers; in another moment it must drop into her lap.

She was paralyzed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AFTER toiling up a rugged and steep ascent, encumbered with blocks of gray stone, of which the island seemed to be formed, forcing his way over fallen trees and through the tangled undergrowth of a species of wild vine, which abounded on the mountain-side, Hazel stopped to breathe and peer around, as well as the dense foliage permitted. He was up to his waist in scrub, and the stiff leaves of the bayonet plant rendered caution necessary in walking. At moments, through the dense foliage,

he caught a glint of the sea. The sun was in the north behind him, and by this alone he guided his road due southerly and upward. Once only he found a small cleared space about an acre in extent, and here it was he uttered the cry Helen heard. He waited a few moments in the hope to hear her voice in reply, but it did not reach him. Again he plunged upward, and now the ascent became at times so arduous that more than once he almost resolved to relinquish, or, at least, to defer his task; but a moment's rest recalled him to himself, and he was one not easily baffled by difficulty or labor, so he toiled on until he judged the summit ought to have been reached. After pausing to take breath and counsel, he fancied that he had borne too much to the left, the ground to his right appeared to rise more than the path that he was pursuing, which had become level, and he concluded, that, instead of ascending, he was circling the mountain-top. He turned aside, therefore, and after ten minutes' hard climbing he was pushing through a thick and high scrub, when the earth seemed to give way beneath him, and he fell — into an abyss.

He was engulfed. He fell from bush to bush — down — down — scratch — rip — plump! until he lodged in a prickly bush more winded than hurt. Out of this he crawled, only to discover himself thus landed in a great and perfectly circular plain of about thirty acres in extent, or about 350 yards in diameter. In the centre was a lake, also circular, the broad belt of shore around this lake was covered with rich grass, level as a bowling-green, and all this again was surrounded by a nearly perpendicular cliff, down which indeed he had fallen: this cliff was thickly clothed with shrubs and trees.

Hazel recognized the crater of an extinct volcano.

On examining the lake he found the waters impregnated with volcanic products. Its bottom was formed of asphaltum. Having made a circuit of the shores, he perceived on the westerly side — that next the island — a break in the cliff; and on a narrow examination he discovered an outlet. It appeared to him that the lake at one time had emptied its waters through this ancient water-course. The descent here was not only gradual, but the old river-bed was tolerably free from obstructions, especially of the vegetable kind.

He made his way rapidly downwards, and in half an hour reached marshy ground. The cane-brake now lay before him. On his left he saw the sea on the south, about a third of a mile. He knew that to the right must be the sea on the north, about half a mile or so. He bent his way thither. The edge of the swamp was very clear, and though somewhat spongy, afforded good walking unimpeded. As he approached the spot where he judged the boat to be, the underwood thickened, the trees again interlaced their arms, and he had to struggle through the foliage. At length he struck the smaller lagoon, and, as he was not certain whether it was fordable, he followed its course to the shore, where he had previously crossed. In a few moments he reached the boat, and was pleased to find her afloat. The rising tide had even moved her a few feet back into the canal.

Hazel shouted to apprise Miss Rolleston of his return, and then proceeded to restore the mast to its place, and replace the rigging and the oars. This occupied some little time. He felt surprised that she had not appeared. He shouted again. No reply.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HAZEL advanced hurriedly into the grove, which he hunted thoroughly, but without effect. He satisfied himself that she could not have quitted the spot, since the marsh enclosed it on one side, the canals on the second and third, the sea on the fourth. He returned to the boat more surprised than anxious. He waited a while, and again shouted her name, — stopped, — listened, — no answer.

Yet surely Helen could not have been more than a hundred yards from where he stood. His heart beat with a strange sense of apprehension. He heard nothing but the rustling of the foliage and the sop of the waves on the shore, as the tide crept up the shingle. As his eyes roved in every direction, he caught sight of something white near the foot of a withered cypress-tree, not fifty yards from where he stood. He approached the bushes in which the tree was partially concealed on that side, and quickly recognized a portion of Helen's dress. He ran towards her, — burst through the underwood, and gained the enclosure. She was sitting there, asleep, as he conjectured, her back leaning against the trunk. He contemplated her thus for one moment, and then he advanced, about to awaken her; but was struck speechless. Her face was ashy pale, her eyes open and widely distended; her bosom heaved slowly. Hazel approached rapidly, and called to her.

Her eyes never moved, not a limb stirred. She sat glaring forward. On her lap was coiled a snake, — gray, mottled with muddy green.

Hazel looked round and selected a branch of the dead tree, about three feet in length. Armed with this, he advanced slowly to the reptile. It was very quiet, thanks to the warmth of her lap. He pointed the stick at it; the vermin lifted its head, and its tail began to quiver; then it darted at the stick, throwing itself its entire length. Hazel retreated, the snake coiled again, and again darted. By repeating this process four or five times, he enticed the creature away; and then availing himself of a moment before it could recoil, he struck it a smart blow on the neck.

When Hazel turned to Miss Rolleston, he found her still fixed in the attitude into which terror had transfixed her. The poor girl had remained motionless for an hour, under the terrible fascination of the reptile, comatized. He spoke to her, but a quick spasmodic action of her throat and a quivering of her hands, alone responded. The sight of her suffering agonized him beyond expression, but he took her hands, — he pressed them, for they were icy cold, — he called piteously on her name. But she seemed incapable of effort. Then stooping he raised her tenderly in his arms, and carried her to the boat, where he laid her still unresisting and incapable.

With trembling limbs and weak hands, he launched the cutter; and they were once more afloat and bound homeward.

He dipped the baler into the fresh water he had brought with him for their daily supply, and dashed it on her forehead. This he repeated until he perceived her breathing became less painful and more rapid. Then he raised her a little, and her head rested upon his arm. When they reached the entrance of the bay he was obliged to pass it, for the wind being still southerly, he could not enter by the north gate, but came round and ran in by the western passage, the same by which they had left the same morning.

Hazel bent over Helen, and whispered tenderly

that they were at home. She answered by a sob. In half an hour, the keel grated on the sand, near the boat-house. Then he asked her if she were strong enough to reach her hut. She raised her head, but she felt dizzy; he helped her to land; all power had forsaken her limbs; her head sank on his shoulder, and his arm, wound round her lithe figure, alone prevented her falling helplessly at his feet. Again he raised her in his arms and bore her to the hut. Here he laid her down on her bed, and stood for a moment beside her, unable to restrain his tears.

CHAPTER XXX.

It was a wretched and anxious night for Hazel. He watched the hut, without the courage to approach it. That one moment of weakness which occurred to him on board the Proserpine when he had allowed Helen to perceive the nature of his feelings towards her, had rendered all his actions open to suspicion. He dared not exhibit towards her any sympathy, — he might not extend to her the most ordinary civility. If she fell ill, if fever supervened! how could he nurse her, attend upon her? His touch must have a significance, he knew that; for, as he bore her insensible form, he embraced rather than carried the precious burden. Could he look upon her in her suffering without betraying his forbidden love? And then would not his attentions afflict more than console?

Chewing the cud of such bitter thoughts, he passed the night, without noticing the change which was taking place over the island. The sun rose; and this awakened him from his reverie, which had replaced sleep; he looked around, and then became sensible of the warnings in the air.

The sea-birds flew about vaguely and absurdly, and seemed sporting in currents of wind; yet there was but little wind down below. Presently clouds came flying over the sky, and blacker masses gathered on the horizon. The sea changed color.

Hazel knew the weather was breaking. The wet season was at hand, — the moment when fever, if such an invisible inhabitant there was on that island, would visit them. In a few hours the rain would be upon them, and he reproached himself with want of care in the construction of the hut. For some hours he hovered around it, before he ventured to approach the door, and call to Helen. He thought he heard her voice faintly, and he entered. She lay there as he had placed her. He knelt beside her, and was appalled at the change in her appearance.

The poor girl's system had received a shock for which it was unprepared. Her severe sufferings at sea had, strange to say, reduced her in appearance less than could have been believed; for her physical endurance proved greater than that of the strong men around her. But the food which the island supplied was not suited to restore her strength, and the nervous shock to which she had been subjected was followed by complete prostration.

Hazel took her unresisting hand, which he would have given a world to press. He felt her pulse; it was weak, but slow. Her cheeks were hollow, her eyes sunken; her hand dropped helplessly when he released it.

Leaving the hut quietly, but hastily, he descended the hill to the rivulet, which he crossed. About half a mile above the boat-house the stream forked, one of its branches coming from the west, the other from the east. Between this latter branch and Ter

rapin Wood, was a stony hill; to this spot Hazel went, and fell to gathering a handful of poppies. When he had obtained a sufficient quantity he returned to the boat-house, made a small fire of chips, and filling his tin baler with water, he set down the poppies to boil. When the liquor was cool, he measured out a portion and drank it. In about twenty minutes his temples began to throb, a sensation which was rapidly followed by nausea.

It was midday before he recovered from the effects of his experiment sufficiently to take food. Then he waited for two hours, and felt much restored. He stole to the hut and looked in. Helen lay there as he had left her. He stooped over her: her eyes were half-closed, and she turned them slowly upon him; her lips moved a little,—that was all. He felt her pulse again; it was still weaker, and slower. He rose and went away, and regaining the boat-house, he measured out a portion of the poppy liquor, one third of the dose he had previously taken, and drank it. No headache or nausea succeeded; he felt his pulse; it became quick and violent, while a sense of numbness overcame him, and he slept. It was but for a few minutes. He awoke with a throbbing brow, and some sickness; but with a sense of delight at the heart, for he had found an opiate, and prescribed its quantity.

He drained the liquor away from the poppy leaves, and carried it to the hut. Measuring with great care a small quantity, he lifted the girl's head and placed it to her lips. She drank it mechanically. Then he watched beside her, until her breathing and her pulse changed in character. She slept. He turned aside then, and buried his face in his hands and prayed fervently for her life,—prayed as we pray for the daily bread of the heart. He prayed and waited.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE next morning, when Helen awoke, she was very weak; her head ached, but she was herself. Hazel had made a broth for her from the fleshy part of a turtle; this greatly revived her, and by mid-day, she was able to sit up. Having seen that her wants were within her reach, he left her; but in a few moments, she heard him busily engaged on the roof of her hut.

On his return, he explained to her his fears that the structure was scarcely as weather-proof as he desired; and he anticipated hourly the commencement of the rainy season. Helen smiled and pointed to the sky, which here was clear and bright. But Hazel shook his head doubtfully. The wet season would commence probably with an atmospheric convulsion, and then settle down to uninterrupted rain. Helen refused obstinately to believe in more rain than they had experienced on board the boat,—a genial shower.

"You will see," replied Hazel. "If you do not change your views within the next three days, then call me a false prophet."

The following day passed, and Helen recovered more strength, but still was too weak to walk; but she employed herself, at Hazel's request, in making a rope of cocoa-nut fibre, some forty yards long. This he required to fish up the spar to a sufficient height on the great palm-tree, and bind it firmly in its place. While she worked nimbly, he employed himself in gathering a store of such things as they would require during the coming wintry season.

She watched him with a smile, but he persevered. So that day passed. The next morning the rope was finished. Helen was not so well, and was about to help herself to the poppy liquor, when Hazel happily stopped her hand in time; he showed her the exact dose necessary, and explained minutely the effects of a larger draught. Then he shouldered the rope, and set out for Palm-tree Point.

He was absent about six hours, of which Helen slept four. And for two, which seemed very long, she ruminated. What was she thinking of that made her smile and weep at the same moment? and she looked so impatiently towards the door.

He entered at last, very fatigued. It was eleven miles to the Point and back. While eating his frugal supper, he gave her a detail of his day's adventures. Strange to say, he had not seen a single seal on the sands. He described how he had tied one end of her rope to the middle of the spar, and with the other between his teeth, he climbed the great palm. For more than an hour he toiled; he gained its top, passed the rope over one of its branches, and hauled up the spar to about eighty feet above the ground; then descending with the other end, he wound the rope spirally round and round the tree, thus binding to its trunk the first twenty feet by which the spar hung from the branch.

She listened very carelessly, he thought, and betrayed little interest in this enterprise which had cost him so much labor and fatigue.

When he had concluded, she was silent a while, and then, looking up quickly, said, to his great surprise,—

"I think I may increase the dose of your medicine there. You are mistaken in its power. I am sure I can take four times what you gave me."

"Indeed you are mistaken," he answered, quickly. "I gave you the extreme measure you can take with safety."

"How do you know that? you can only guess at its effects. At any rate, I shall try it."

Hazel hesitated, and then confessed that he had made a little experiment on himself before risking its effects upon her.

Helen looked up at him as he said this so simply and quietly. Her great eyes filled with an angelic light. Was it admiration? Was it thankfulness? Her bosom heaved, and her lips quivered. It was but a moment, and she felt glad that Hazel had turned away from her and saw nothing.

A long silence followed this little episode, when she was aroused from her reverie.

Patter — pat — pat — patter.

She looked up.

Pat — patter — patter.

Their eyes met. It was the rain. Hazel only smiled a little, and then ran down to his boat-house, to see that all was right there, and then returned with a large bundle of chips, with which he made a fire, for the sky had darkened overhead. Gusts of wind ran along the water; it had become suddenly chilly. They had almost forgotten the feel of wet weather.

Erre the fire had kindled, the rain came down in torrents, and the matted roof being resonant, they heard it strike here and there above their heads.

Helen sat down on her little stool and reflected.

In that hut were two persons. One had foretold this, and feared it, and provided against it. The other had said petulantly, it was a bugbear.

And now the rain was pattering, and the Prophet was on his knees making her as comfortable as he

could in spite of all, and was not the man to remind her he had foretold it.

She pondered his character while she watched his movements. He put down his embers, then he took a cocoa-pod out from the wall, cut it in slices with his knife, and made a fine clear fire; then he ran out again, in spite of Helen's remonstrance, and brought a dozen large scales of the palm-tree. It was all the more cheering for the dismal scene without and the pattering of the rain on the resounding roof.

But thanks to Hazel's precaution, the hut proved weather-tight; of which fact having satisfied himself, he bade her good night. He was at the door when her voice recalled him.

"Mr. Hazel, I cannot rest this night without asking your pardon for all the unkind things I may have done and said; without thanking you humbly for your great forbearance and your—respect for the unhap—I mean the unfortunate girl thus cast upon your mercy."

She held out her hand; he took it between his own, and faintly expressed his gratitude for her kindness; and so she sent him away brimful of happiness.

The rain was descending in torrents. She heard it, but he did not feel it; for she had spread her angel's wings over his existence, and he regained his sheltered boat-house he knew not how.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE next day was Sunday. Hazel had kept a calendar of the week, and every seventh day was laid aside with jealousy, to be devoted to such simple religious exercises as he could invent. The rain still continued, with less violence indeed, but without an hour's intermission. After breakfast he read to her the exodus of the Israelites, and their sufferings during that desert life. He compared those hardships with their own troubles, and pointed out to her how their condition presented many things to be thankful for. The island was fruitful, the climate healthy. They might have been cast away on a sandy key or reef, where they would have perished slowly and miserably of hunger and exposure. Then they were spared to each other. Had she been alone there, she could not have provided for herself; had he been cast away a solitary man, the island would have been to him an intolerable prison.

In all these reflections Hazel was very guarded that no expression should escape him to arouse her apprehension. He was so careful of this, that she observed his caution and watched his restraint. And Helen was thinking more of this than of the holy subject on which he was discoursing. The disguise he threw over his heart was penetrable to the girl's eye. She saw his love in every careful word, and employed herself in detecting it under his rigid manner. Secure in her own position, she could examine his from the loopholes of her soul, and take a pleasure in witnessing the suppressed happiness she could bestow with a word. She did not wonder at her power. The best of women have the natural vanity to take for granted the sway they assume over the existence which submits to them.

A week passed thus, and Hazel blessed the rain that drove them to this sociability. He had prepared the bladder of a young seal which had drifted ashore dead. This membrane dried in the sun

formed a piece of excellent parchment, and he desired to draw upon it a map of the island. To accomplish this, the first thing was to obtain a good red ink from the cochineal, which is crimson. He did according to his means. He got one of the tin vessels, and filed it till he had obtained a considerable quantity of the metal. This he subjected for forty hours to the action of lime-juice. He then added the cochineal, and mixed till he obtained a fine scarlet. In using it he added a small quantity of a hard and pure gum,—he had found gum abounded in the island. His pen was made from an osprey's feather, hundreds of which were strewn about the cliffs, and some of these he had already secured and dried.

Placing his tin baler before him, on which he had scratched his notes, he drew a map of the island.

"What shall we call it?" said he.

Helen paused, and then replied, "Call it 'God-send' Island."

"So I will," he said, and wrote it down.

Then they named the places they had seen. The reef Helen had discovered off the northwest coast they called "White Water Island," because of the breakers. Then came "Seal Bay," Palm-tree Point, "Mount Lookout" (this was the hill due south of where they lived). They called the cane-brake "Wild Duck Swamp," and the spot where they lunched "Cochineal Clearing." The mountain was named "Mount Cavity."

"But what shall we call the capital of the kingdom—this hut?" said Miss Rolleston, as she leaned over him and pointed to the spot.

"Saint Helen's," said Hazel, looking up; and he wrote it down ere she could object.

Then there was a little awkward pause, while he was busily occupied in filling up some topographical details. She turned it off gayly.

"What are those caterpillars that you have drawn there, sprawling over my kingdom?" she asked.

"Caterpillars! you are complimentary, Miss Rolleston. Those are mountains."

"O, indeed; and those lines you are now drawing are rivers, I presume."

"Yes; let us call this branch of our solitary estuary, which runs westward, the River Lee, and this, to the east, the River Medway. Is such your majesty's pleasure?"

"*La Reine le veut*," replied Helen, smiling. "But, Master Geographer, it seems to me, that you are putting in mountains and rivers which you have never explored: how do you know that these turns and twists in the stream exist as you represent them? and those spurs, which look so real, have you not added them only to disguise the caterpillar character of your range of hills?"

Hazel laughed as he confessed to drawing on his fancy for some little details. But pleaded that all geographers, when they drew maps, were licensed to fill in a few such touches, where discovery had failed to supply particulars.

Helen had always believed religiously in maps, and was amused when she reflected on her former credulity.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HELEN's strength was coming back to her but slowly; she complained of great lassitude and want of appetite. But the following day having cleared up, the sun shone out with great power and bril-

hancy. She gladly welcomed the return of the fine weather, but Hazel shook his head; ten days' rain was not their portion, — the bad weather would return, and complete the month or six weeks' winter to which Nature was entitled. The next evening the appearance of the sky confirmed his opinion. The sun set like a crimson shield; gory, and double its usual size. It entered into a thick bank of dark violet cloud that lay on the horizon, and seemed to split the vapor into rays, but of a dusky kind; immediately above this crimson, the clouds were of a brilliant gold, but higher they were the color of rubies, and went gradually off to gray.

But, as the orb dipped to the horizon a solid pile of unearthly clouds came up from the southeast; their bodies were singularly and unnaturally black, and mottled with copper color, and hemmed with a fiery yellow: and these infernal clouds towered up their heads, pressing forward as if they all strove for precedence; it was like Milton's fiends attacking the sky. The rate at which they climbed was wonderful. The sun set and the moon rose full, and showed those angry masses surging upwards and jostling each other as they flew.

Yet below it was dead calm.

Having admired the sublimity of the scene, and seen the full moon rise, but speedily lose her light in a brassy halo, they entered the hut, which was now the head-quarters, and they supped together there.

While they were eating their little meal the tops of the trees were heard to sigh, so still was everything else. None the less did those strange clouds fly northward, eighty miles an hour. After supper Helen sat busy over the fire, where some gum, collected by Hazel, resembling India-rubber, was boiling; she was preparing to cover a pair of poor Welch's shoes, inside and out, with a coat of this material, which Hazel believed to be waterproof. She sat in such a position that he could watch her. It was a happy evening. She seemed content. She had got over her fear of him; they were good comrades if they were nothing more. It was happiness to him to be by her side even on those terms. He thought of it all as he looked at her. How distant she had seemed once to him; what an unapproachable goddess. Yet there she was by his side in a hut he had made for her.

He could not help sipping the soft intoxicating draught her mere presence offered him. But by and by he felt his heart was dissolving within him, and he was trifling with danger. He must not look on her too long, seated by the fire like a wife. The much-enduring man rose, and turned his back upon the sight he loved so dearly: he went out at the open door intending to close it and bid her good night. But he did not do so, just then; for his attention as an observer of nature was arrested by the unusual conduct of certain animals. Gannets and other sea-birds were running about the opposite wood and craning their necks in a strange way. He had never seen one enter that wood before.

Seals and sea-lions were surrounding the slope, and crawling about, and now and then plunging into the river, which they crossed with infinite difficulty, for it was running very high and strong. The trees also sighed louder than ever. Hazel turned back to tell Miss Rolleston something extraordinary was going on. She sat in sight from the river, and as he came towards the hut, he saw her sitting by the fire reading.

He stopped short. Her work lay at her feet:

she had taken out a letter, and she was reading it by the fire.

As she read it her face was a puzzle. But Hazel saw the act alone; and a dart of ice seemed to go through and through him.

This, then, was her true source of consolation. He thought it was so before. He had even reason to think so. But never seeing any palpable proofs, he had almost been happy. He turned sick with jealous misery, and stood there rooted and frozen.

Then came a fierce impulse to shut the sight out that caused this pain.

He almost flung her portcullis to, and made his hands bleed. But a bleeding heart does not feel scratches.

"Good night," said he, hoarsely.

"Good night," said she, kindly.

And why should she not read his letter? One was his affianced bride, bound to him by honor as well as inclination. This was the reflection to which, after a sore battle with his loving heart, the much-enduring man had to come at last; and he had come to it, and was getting back his peace of mind, though not his late complacency, and about to seek repose in sleep, when suddenly a clap of wind came down like thunder, and thrashed the island and everything in it.

Everything animate and inanimate seemed to cry out as the blow passed.

Another soon followed, and another, — intermittent gusts at present, but of such severity that not one came without making its mark.

Birds were driven away like paper; the sea-lions whimpered, and crouched into corners, and huddled together, and held each other, whining.

Hazel saw but one thing; the frail edifice he had built for the creature he adored. He looked out of his boat, and fixed his horror-stricken eyes on it; he saw it waving to and fro, yet still firm. But he could not stay there. If not in danger she must be terrified. He must go and support her. He left his shelter, and ran towards her hut. With a whoop and a scream another blast tore through the wood, and caught him. He fell, dug his hands into the soil, and clutched the earth. While he was in that position, he heard a sharp crack; he looked up in dismay, and saw that one of Helen's trees had broken like a carrot, and the head was on the ground leaping about; while a succession of horrible sounds of crashing, and rending, and tearing, showed the frail hut was giving way on every side; racked and riven, and torn to pieces. Hazel, though a stout man, uttered cries of terror death would never have drawn from him; and, with a desperate headlong rush, he got to the place where the bower had been; but now it was a prostrate skeleton, with the mat roof flapping like a loose sail above it, and Helen below.

As he reached the hut, the wind got hold of the last of the four shrubs, that did duty for a door and tore it from the cord that held it, and whirled it into the air; it went past Hazel's face like a bird flying.

Though staggered himself by the same blow of wind, he clutched the tree and got into the hut.

He found her directly. She was kneeling beneath the mat that a few minutes ago had been her roof. He extricated her in a moment, uttering inarticulate cries of pity and fear.

"Don't be frightened," said she. "I am not hurt."

But he felt her quiver from head to foot. Ha

wrapped her in all her rugs, and, thinking of nothing but her safety, lifted her in his strong arms to take her to his own place, which was safe from wind at least.

But this was no light work. To go there erect was impossible.

Holding tight by the tree, he got her to the lee of the tent and waited for a lull. He went rapidly down the hill, but ere he reached the river, a gust came careering over the sea. A sturdy young tree was near him. He placed her against it, and wound his arms round her and its trunk. The blast came: the tree bent down almost to the ground, then whirled round, recovered, shivered; but he held firmly. It passed. Again he lifted her, and bore her to the boat-house. As he went, the wind almost choked her, and her long hair lashed his face like a whip. But he got her in, and then sat panting and crouching, but safe. They were none too soon; the tempest increased in violence, and became more continuous. No clouds, but a ghastly glare all over the sky. No rebellious waves, but a sea hissing and foaming under its master's lash. The river ran roaring and foaming by, and made the boat heave even in its little creek. The wind, though it could no longer shake them, went screaming terribly close over their heads, — no longer like air in motion, but, solid and keen, it seemed the Almighty's scythe mowing down Nature; and soon it became, like turbid water, blackened with the leaves, branches, and fragments of all kinds it whirled along with it. The trees fell crashing on all sides, and the remains passed over their heads into the sea.

Helen behaved admirably. Speech was impossible, but she thanked him without it, — eloquently; she nestled her little hand into Hazel's, and, to Hazel that night, with all its awful sights and sounds, was a blissful one. She had been in danger, but now was safe by his side. She had pressed his hand to thank him, and now she was cowering a little towards him in a way that claimed him as her protector. Her glorious hair blew over him and seemed to net him: and now and then, as they heard some crash nearer and more awful than another, she clutched him quickly though lightly; for, in danger, her sex love to feel a friend; it is not enough to see him near: and once, when a great dusky form of a sea-lion came crawling over the mound, and whimpering, peeped into the boat-house, she even fled to his shoulder with both hands for a moment, and was there, light as a feather, till the creature had passed on. And his soul was full of peace, and a great tranquillity overcame it. He heard nothing of the wreck, knew nothing of the danger.

O mighty Love! The tempest might blow, and fill the air and earth with ruin, so that it spared her. The wind was kind, and gentle the night, which brought that hair round his face, and that head so near his shoulder, and gave him the holy joy of protecting under his wing the soft creature he adored.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ON the morning that followed this memorable night, our personages seemed to change characters. Hazel sat down before the relics of the hut — three or four strings dangling, and a piece of network waving — and eyed them with shame, regret, and humiliation. He was so absorbed in his self-reproaches that he did not hear a light footstep,

and Helen Rolleston stood near him a moment or two, and watched the play of his countenance with a very inquisitive and kindly light in her own eyes.

"Never mind," said she, soothingly.

Hazel started at the music.

"Never mind your house being blown to atoms and mine has stood?" said he, half reproachfully.

"You took too much pains with it."

"I will take a great deal more with the next."

"I hope not. But I want you to come and look at the havoc. It is terrible; and yet so grand." And thus she drew him away from the sight that caused his pain.

They entered the wood by a path Hazel had cut from the seashore, and viewed the devastation in Terrapin Wood. Prostrate trees lay across one another in astonishing numbers, and in the strangest positions; and their glorious plumes swept the earth. "Come," said she, "it is a bad thing for the poor trees, but not for us. See, the place is strewn with treasures. Here is a tree full of fans all ready made. And what is that? A horse's tail growing on a cocoa-tree! and a long one too! that will make ropes for you, and thread for me. Ah, and here is a cabbage. Poor Mr. Welch! Well, for one thing, you need never saw nor climb any more. See the advantages of a hurricane."

From the wood she took him to the shore, and there they found many birds lying dead; and Hazel picked up several that he had read of as good to eat. For certain signs had convinced him his fair and delicate companion was carnivora, and must be nourished accordingly. Seeing him so employed, she asked him archly whether he was beginning to see the comforts of a hurricane. "Not yet," said he; "the account is far from even."

"Then come to where the rock was blown down." She led the way gayly across the sands to a point where an overhanging crag had fallen, with two trees, and a quantity of earth and plants that grew above it. But, when they got nearer, she became suddenly grave, and stood still. The mass had fallen upon a sheltered place, where seals were hiding from the wind, and had buried several; for two or three limbs were sticking out, of victims overwhelmed in the ruin; and a magnificent sea-lion lay clear of the smaller rubbish, but quite dead. The cause was not far to seek: a ton of hard rock had struck him, and then ploughed up the sand in a deep furrow, and now rested within a yard or two of the animal, whose back it had broken. Hazel went up to the creature and looked at it: then he came to Helen; she was standing aloof. "Poor bugbear," said he. "Come away: it is an ugly sight for you."

"O yes," said Helen. Then, as they returned, "Does not that reconcile you to the loss of a hut? We are not blown away nor crushed."

"That is true," said Hazel; "but suppose your health should suffer from the exposure to such fearful weather. So unlucky! so cruel! just as you were beginning to get stronger."

"I am all the better for it. Shall I tell you? excitement is a good thing; not too often, of course; but now and then; and when we are in the humor for it, it is meat and drink, and medicine to us."

"What! to a delicate young lady?"

"Ay, 'to a delicate young lady.' Last night has done me a world of good. It has shaken me out of myself. I am in better health and spirits. Of course I am very sorry the hut is blown down, — because you took so much trouble to build it: but

on my own account, I really don't care a straw. Find me some corner to nestle in at night, and all day I mean to be about, and busy as a bee, helping you, and—Breakfast! breakfast! O, how hungry I am." And this spirited girl led the way to the boat with a briskness and a vigor that charmed and astonished him.

Souvent femme varie.

This gracious behavior did not blind Hazel to the serious character of the situation, and all breakfast-time he was thinking and thinking, and often kept a morsel in his mouth, and forgot to eat it for several seconds, he was so anxious and puzzled. At last, he said, "I know a large hollow tree with apertures. If I were to close them all but one, and keep that for the door? No: trees have betrayed me; I'll never trust another tree with you. Stay; I know—I know—a cavern. He uttered the verb rather loudly, but the substantive with a sudden feebleness of intonation that was amusing. His timidity was superfluous; if he had said he knew "a bank where-on the wild thyme grows," the suggestion would have been well received that morning.

"A cavern!" cried Helen. "It has always been the dream of my life to live in a cavern."

Hazel brightened up. But the next moment he clouded again. "But I forgot. It will not do: there is a spring running right through it; it comes down nearly perpendicular, through a channel it has bored, or enlarged; and splashes on the floor."

"How convenient!" said Helen; "now I shall have a bath in my room, instead of having to go miles for it. By the by, now you have invented the shower-bath, please discover Soap. Not that one really wants any in this island; for there is no dust, and the very air seems purifying. But who can shake off the prejudices of early education?"

Hazel said, "Now I'll laugh as much as you like, when once this care is off my mind."

He ran off to the cavern, and found it spacious and safe; but the spring was falling in great force, and the roof of the cave glistening with moisture. It looked a hopeless case. But if Necessity is the mother of Invention, surely Love is the father. He mounted to the rock above, and found the spot where the spring suddenly descended into the earth with the loudest gurgling he had ever heard; a gurgling of defiance. Nothing was to be done there. But he traced it upwards a little way, and found a place where it ran beside a deep decline. "Aha, my friend!" said he. He got his spade, and with some hours' hard work dug it a fresh channel, and carried it away entirely from its course. He returned to the cavern. Water was dripping very fast; but, on looking up, he could see the light of day twinkling at the top of the spiral watercourse he had robbed of its supply. Then he conceived a truly original idea: why not turn his empty watercourse into a chimney, and so give to one element what he had taken from another? He had no time to execute this just then, for the tide was coming in, and he could not afford to lose any one of those dead animals. So he left the funnel to drip, that being a process he had no means of expediting, and moored the sea-lion to the very rock that had killed him, and was proceeding to dig out the seals, when a voice he never could hear without a thrill, summoned him to dinner.

It was a plentiful repast, and included roast pintado and cabbage-palm. Helen Rolleston informed him during dinner that he would no longer

be allowed to monopolize the labor attendant upon their condition.

"No," said she, "you are always working for me, and I shall work for you. Cooking and washing are a woman's work, not a man's; and so are plaiting and netting."

This healthy resolution once formed was adhered to with a constancy that belonged to the girl's character. The roof of the ruined hut came ashore in the bay that evening, and was fastened over the boat. Hazel lighted a bonfire in the cavern, and had the satisfaction of seeing some of the smoke issue above. But he would not let Miss Rolleston occupy it yet. He shifted her things to the boat, and slept in the cave himself. However, he lost no time in laying down a great hearth, and built a fireplace and chimney in the cave. The chimney went up to the hole in the arch of the cave; then came the stone funnel, stolen from Nature; and above, on the upper surface of the cliff, came the chimney-pot. Thus, the chimney acted like a German stove: it stood in the centre, and soon made the cavern very dry and warm, and a fine retreat during the rains. When it was ready for occupation, Helen said she would sail to it: she would not go by land; that was too tame for her. Hazel had only to comply with her humor, and at high water they got into the boat, and went down the river into the sea with a rush that made Helen wince. He soon rowed her across the bay to a point distant not more than fifty yards from the cavern, and installed her. But he never returned to the river; it was an inconvenient place to make excursions from; and, besides, all his work was now either in or about the cavern; and that convenient hurricane, as Helen called it, not only made him a builder again; it also made him a currier, a soap-boiler, and a salter. So they drew the boat just above high-water mark in a sheltered nook, and he set up his arsenal ashore.

In this situation, day glided by after day, and week after week, in vigorous occupations, brightened by social intercourse, and in some degree by the beauty and the friendship of the animals. Of all this industry we can only afford a brief summary. Hazel fixed two uprights at each side of the cavern's mouth, and connected each pair by a beam; a netting laid on these, and covered with gigantic leaves from the prostrate palms, made a sufficient roof in this sheltered spot. On this terrace they could sit even in the rain, and view the sea. Helen cooked in the cave, but served dinner up on this beautiful terrace. So now she had a But and a Ben, as the Scotch say. He got a hogshead of oil from the sea-lion; and so the cave was always lighted now, and that was a great comfort, and gave them more hours of in-door employment and conversation. The poor bugbear really brightened their existence. Of the same oil, boiled down and mixed with wood-ashes, he made soap, to Helen's great delight. The hide of this animal was so thick he could do nothing with it but cut off pieces to make the soles of shoes if required. But the seals were miscellaneous treasures; he contrived with guano and aromatics to curry their skins; of their bladders he made vile parchment, and of their entrails gut, catgut, and twine, beyond compare. He salted two cubs, and laid up the rest in store, by enclosing large pieces in clay. When these were to be used, the clay was just put into hot embers for some hours, then broken, and the meat eaten with all its juices preserved.

Helen cooked and washed, and manufactured salt; and collected quite a store of wild cotton, though it grew very sparingly, and it cost her hours to find a few pods. But in hunting for it she found other things,—health for one. After sunset she was generally employed a couple of hours on matters which occupy the fair in every situation of life. She made herself a sealskin jacket and pork-pie hat. She made Mr. Hazel a man's cap of seal-skin with a point. But her great work was with the cotton, which will be described hereafter.

However, for two hours after sunset, no more (they rose at peep of day), her physician allowed her to sit and work; which she did, and often smiled, while he sat by and discoursed to her of all the things he had read, and surprised himself by the strength and activity of his memory. He attributed it partly to the air of the island. Nor were his fingers idle even at night. He had tools to sharpen for the morrow, glass to make and polish out of a laminated crystal he had found. And then the hurricane had blown away, amongst many properties, his map; so he had to make another with similar materials. He completed the map in due course, and gave it to Helen. It was open to the same strictures she had passed on the other. Hazel was no cartographer. Yet this time she had nothing but praise for it. How was that?

To the reader it is now presented, not as a specimen of cartographic art, but as a little curiosity in its way, being a *fac-simile* of the map John Hazel drew for Helen Rolleston, with such out-of-the-way materials as that out-of-the-way island afforded. Above all, it will enable the reader to follow our personages in their little excursions past and future, and also to trace the course of a mysterious event we have to record.

Relieved of other immediate cares, Hazel's mind had time to dwell upon the problem Helen had set him; and one fine day a conviction struck him that he had taken a narrow and puerile view of it, and that, after all, there must be in the nature of things some way to attract ships from a distance. Possessed with this thought, he went up to Telegraph Point, abstracted his mind from all external objects, and fixed it on this idea,—but came down as he went. He descended by some steps he had cut zig-zag for Helen's use, and as he put his foot on the fifth step,—who—whirr—whizz—came nine ducks, cooling his head, they whizzed so close; and made right for the lagoons.

"Hum!" thought Hazel; "I never see you ducks fly in any other direction but that."

This speculation rankled in him all night, and he told Helen he should reconnoitre at daybreak, but should not take her, as there might be snakes. He made the boat ready at daybreak, and certain gannets, pintadoes, boobies, and noddies, and divers with eyes in their heads like fiery jewels—birds whose greedy maws he had often gratified—chose to fancy he must be going a fishing, and were on the alert, and rather troublesome. However, he got adrift, and ran out through North Gate, with a light westerly breeze, followed by a whole fleet of birds. These were joined in due course by another of his satellites, a young seal he called Tommy, also fond of fishing.

The feathered convoy soon tailed off; but Tommy stuck to him for about eight miles. He ran that distance to have a nearer look at a small island which lay due north of Telegraph Point. He satisfied

himself it was little more than a very long, large reef, the neighborhood of which ought to be avoided by ships of burden, and resolving to set some beacon or other on it ere long, he christened it White Water Island, on account of the surf: he came about and headed for the East Bluff.

Then Tommy gave him up in disgust; perhaps thought his conduct vacillating. Animals all despise that.

He soon landed almost under the volcano, and moored his boat not far from a cliff peaked with guano. Exercising due caution this time, he got up to the lagoons, and found a great many ducks swimming about. He approached little parties to examine their varieties. They all swam out of his way; some of them even flew a few yards, and then settled. Not one would let him come within forty yards. This convinced Hazel the ducks were not natives of the island, but strangers, who were not much afraid, because they had never been molested on this particular island; but still distrusted man.

While he pondered thus, there was a great noise of wings, and about a dozen ducks flew over his head on the rise, and passed westward still rising till they got into the high currents, and away upon the wings of the wind for distant lands.

The grand rush of their wings and the off-hand way in which they spurned, abandoned, and disappeared from, an island that held him tight, made Hazel feel very small. His thoughts took the form of Satire. "Lords of the creation, are we? We sink in water; in air we tumble; on earth we stumble."

These pleasing reflections did not prevent him taking their exact line of flight, and barking a tree to mark it. He was about to leave the place, when he heard a splashing not far from him, and there was a duck jumping about on the water in a strange way. Hazel thought a snake had got hold of her and ran to her assistance. He took her out of the water and soon found what was the matter; her bill was open and a fish's tail was sticking out. Hazel inserted his finger and dragged out a small fish which had erected the spines on its back so opportunely as nearly to kill its destroyer. The duck recovered enough to quack in a feeble and dubious manner. Hazel kept her for Helen, because she was a plain brown duck. With some little reluctance he slightly shortened one wing, and stowed away his captive in the hold of the boat.

He happened to have a great stock of pitch in the boat, so he employed a few hours in writing upon the guano rocks. On one he wrote in huge letters:—

AN ENGLISH LADY WRECKED HERE.
HASTE TO HER RESCUE.

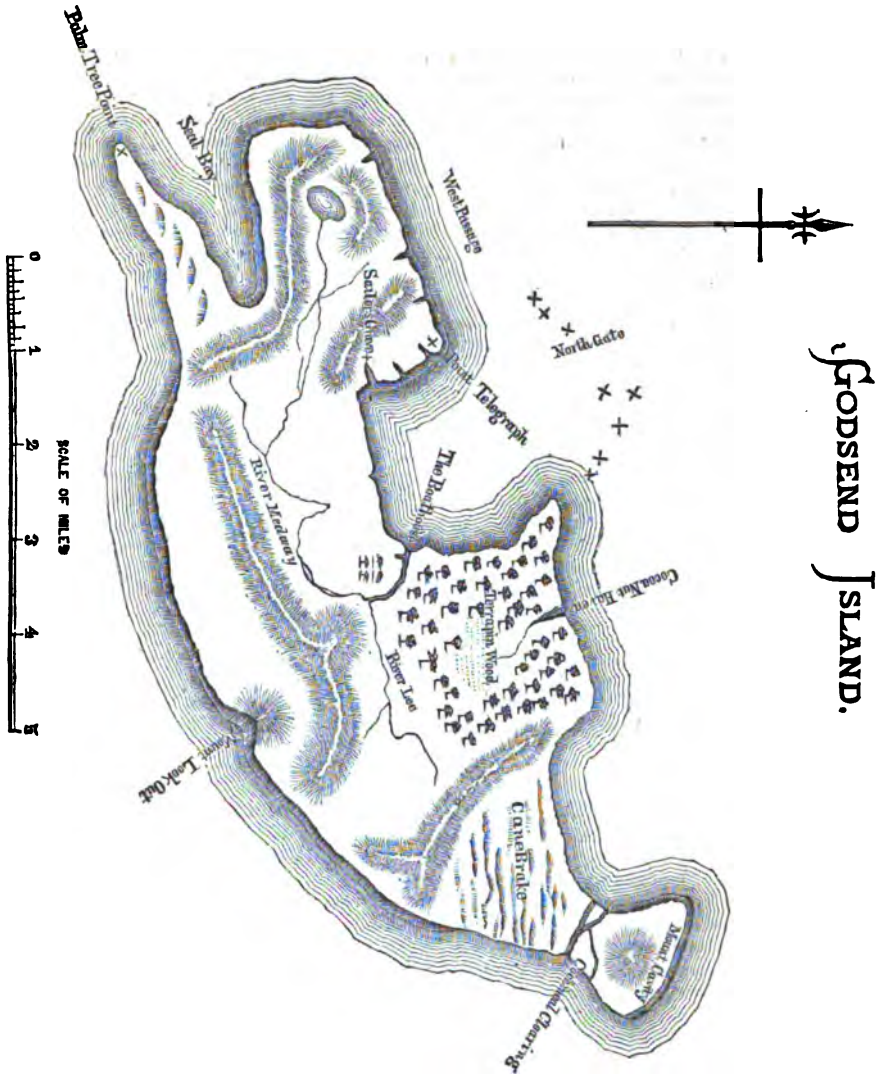
On another he wrote in smaller letters:—

BEWARE THE REEFS ON THE NORTH SIDE.
LIE OFF FOR SIGNALS.

Then he came home and beached the boat, and brought Helen his captive.

"Why, it is an English duck!" she cried, and was enraptured.

By this visit to the lagoons, Hazel gathered that this island was a half-way house for migrating birds, especially ducks; and he inferred that the line those vagrants had taken was the shortest way from this island to the nearest land. This was worth knowing, and set his brain working. He begged Helen to watch for the return of the turtle-doves



(they had all left the island just *before* the rain) and learn, if possible, from what point of the compass they arrived.

The next expedition was undertaken to please Helen; she wished to examine the beautiful creeks and caves on the north side, which they had seen from a distance when they sailed round the island.

They started on foot one delightful day, and walked briskly, for the air, though balmy, was ex-

hilarating. They followed the course of the riv- till they came to the lake that fed it, and was it- itself by hundreds of little natural gutters dow- which the hills discharged the rains. This was ne- to Helen, though not to Hazel: she produced th- map, and told the lake slyly that it was incorrect, little too big. She took some of the water in h- hand, sprinkled the lake with it, and called it H- zelmere. They bore a little to the right and pr- ceeded till they found a creek shaped like a wedg-

at whose broad end shone an arch of foliage studded with flowers, and the sparkling blue water peeped behind. This was tempting, but the descent was rather hazardous at first; great square blocks of rock, one below another, and these rude steps were coated with mosses of rich hue, but wet and slippery; Hazel began to be alarmed for his companion. However, after one or two difficulties, the fissure opened wider to the sun, and they descended from the slimy rocks into a sloping hotbed of exotic flowers, and those huge succulent leaves that are the glory of the tropics. The ground was carpeted a yard deep with their luxuriance, and others more aspiring, climbed the warm sides of the diverging cliffs, just as creepers go up a wall, lining every crevice as they rose. In this blessed spot, warmed, yet not scorched, by the tropical sun, and fed with trickling waters, was seen what marvels "boon Nature" can do. Here our vegetable dwarfs were giants, and our flowers were trees. One lovely giantess of the jasmine tribe, but with flowers shaped like a marigold, and scented like a tuberosa, had a stem as thick as a poplar, and carried its thousand buds and amber-colored flowers up eighty feet of broken rock, and planted on every ledge suckers, that flowered again, and filled the air with perfume. Another tree about half as high was covered with a cascade of snow-white tulips, each as big as a small flower-pot, and scented like honeysuckle. An aloe, ten feet high, blossomed in a corner, unheeded among loftier beauties. And at the very mouth of the fissure a huge banana leaned across, and flung out its vast leaves, that seemed translucent gold against the sun; under it shone a monstrous cactus in all her pink and crimson glory, and through the maze of color streamed the deep blue of the peaceful ocean, laughing, and catching sunbeams.

Helen leaned against the cliff and quivered with delight, and that deep sense of flowers that belongs to your true woman.

Hazel feared she was ill.

"Ill?" said she. "Who *could* be ill here? It is heaven upon earth. O, you dears! O, you loves! And they all seemed growing on the sea, and floating in the sun."

"And it is only one of a dozen such," said Hazel. "If you would like to inspect them at your leisure, I'll just run to Palm-tree Point; for my signal is all askew. I saw that as we came along."

Helen assented readily, and he ran off; but left her the provisions. She was not to wait dinner for him.

Helen examined two or three of the flowery fissures, and found fresh beauties in each, and also some English leaves, that gave her pleasure of another kind; and, after she had revelled in the flowers, she examined the shore, and soon discovered that the rocks, which abounded here, (though there were also large patches of clear sand,) were nearly all pure coral, in great variety. Red coral was abundant; and even the pink coral, to which fashion was just then giving a fictitious value, was there by the ton. This interested her, and so did some beautiful shells that lay sparkling. The time passed swiftly; and she was still busy in her researches, when suddenly it darkened a little, and, looking back, she saw a white vapor stealing over the cliff, and curling down.

Upon this, she thought it prudent to return to the place where Hazel had left her; the more so as it was near sunset.

The vapor descended and spread, and covered sea and land. Then the sun set: and it was darkness visible. Coming from the south, the sea-fret caught Hazel sooner and in a less favorable situation. Returning from the palm-tree, he had taken the shortest cut through a small jungle, and been so impeded by the scrub, that, when he got clear, the fog was upon him. Between that and the river, he lost his way several times, and did not hit the river till near midnight. He followed the river to the lake, and coasted the lake, and then groped his way towards the creek. But, after a while, every step he took was fraught with danger; and the night was far advanced when he at last hit off the creek, as he thought. He halloed; but there was no reply; halloed again, and to his joy, her voice replied; but at a distance. He had come to the wrong creek. She was farther westward. He groped his way westward, and came to another creek. He halloed to her, and she answered him. But to attempt the descent would have been mere suicide. She felt that herself, and almost ordered him to stay where he was.

"Why, we can talk all the same," said she; "and it is not for long."

It was a curious position, and one typical of the relation between them. So near together, yet the barrier so strong.

"I am afraid you must be very cold," said he.

"O no; I have my seal-skin jacket on; and it is so sheltered here. I wish you were as well off."

"You are not afraid to be alone down there?"

"I am not alone when your voice is near me. Now don't you fidget yourself, dear friend. I like these little excitements. I have told you so before. Listen: how calm and silent it all is; the place; the night! The mind seems to fill with great ideas, and to feel its immortality."

She spoke with solemnity, and he heard in silence.

Indeed it was a reverend time and place: the sea, whose loud and penetrating tongue had, in some former age, created the gully where they both sat apart, had of late years receded, and kissed the sands gently that calm night: so gently, that its long, low murmur seemed but the echo of tranquillity.

The voices of that pair sounded supernatural, one speaking up, and the other down, the speakers quite invisible.

"Mr. Hazel," said Helen, in a low, earnest voice; "they say that Night gives wisdom even to the wise; think now, and tell me your true thoughts. Has the foot of man ever trod upon this island before?"

There was a silence due to a question so grave, and put with solemnity, at a solemn time, in a solemn place.

At last Hazel's thoughtful voice came down. "The world is very, very, very old. So old, that the words, 'Ancient History' are a falsehood, and Moses wrote but as yesterday. And man is a very old animal upon this old, old planet; and has been everywhere. I cannot doubt he has been here."

Her voice went up. "But have you seen any signs?"

His voice came down. "I have not looked for them. The bones and the weapons of primeval man are all below earth's surface at this time of day."

There was a dead silence. Then Helen's voice went up again. "But in modern times? Has no man landed here from far-off places, since ships were built?"

The voice came sadly down. "I do not know."

The voice went up. "But think!"

The voice came down. "What calamity can be new in a world so old as this? Everything we can do, and suffer, others of our race have done, and suffered."

The voice went up. "Hush! there's something moving on the sand."

CHAPTER XXXV.

HAZEL waited and listened. So did Helen, and her breath came fast; for in the still night she heard light but mysterious sounds. Something was moving on the sand very slowly and softly, but nearer and nearer. Her heart began to leap. She put out her hand instinctively to clutch Mr. Hazel, but he was too far off. She had the presence of mind and the self-denial to disguise her fears; for she knew he would come headlong to her assistance.

She said in a quivering whisper, "I'm not frightened; only v—very c—curious."

And now she became conscious that not only one but several things were creeping about.

Presently the creeping ceased, and was followed by a louder and more mysterious noise. In that silent night it sounded like raking and digging. Three or four mysterious visitants seemed to be making graves.

This was too much; especially coming as it did after talk about the primeval dead. Her desire to scream was so strong, and she was so afraid Hazel would break his neck, if she relieved her mind in that way, that she actually took her handkerchief and bit it hard.

But this situation was cut short by a beneficent luminary. The sun rose with a magnificent bound, — it was his way in that latitude, — and everything unpleasant winced that moment; the fog shivered in its turn, and appeared to open in furrows as great lavellins of golden light shot through it from the swiftly rising orb. Soon, those golden darts increased to streams of potable fire, that burst the fog and illumined the wet sands: and Helen burst out laughing like chanticleer, for this first break of day revealed the sextons that had scared her, — three ponderous turtles, crawling, slow and clumsy, back to sea. Hazel joined her, and they soon found what these evil spirits of the island had been at, poor wretches. They had each buried a dozen eggs in the sand: one dozen of which were very soon set boiling. At first, indeed, Helen objected that they had no shells, but Hazel told her she might as well complain of a rose without a thorn. He assured her turtles' eggs were a known delicacy, and very superior to birds' eggs; and so she found them; they were eaten with the keenest relish.

"And now," said Helen, "for my discoveries. First, here are my English leaves, only bigger. I found them on a large tree."

"English leaves!" cried Hazel, with rapture.

"Why it is the caoutchouc!"

"O dear," said Helen, disappointed; "I took it for the India-rubber tree."

"It is the India-rubber tree and I have been hunting for it all over the island in vain, and using wretchedly inferior gums for want of it."

"I'm so glad," said Helen. "And now I have something else to show you: something that curdled my blood; but I dare say I was very foolish." She then took him half across the sand and pointed out to him a number of stones dotted over the sand

in a sort of oval. These stones, streaked with sea grass, and encrusted with small shells, were not at equal distances, but yet, allowing for gaps, they formed a decided figure. Their outline resembled a great fish, wanting the tail.

"Can this be chance?" asked Helen; "O, if it should be what I fear, and that is — Savages!"

Hazel considered it attentively a long time. "Too far at sea for living savages," said he. "And yet it cannot be chance. What on earth is it? It looks Druidical. But how can that be? The island was smaller when these were placed here than it is now." He went nearer and examined one of the stones; then he scraped away the sand from its base, and found it was not shaped like a stone, but more like a whale's rib. He became excited; went on his knees, and tore the sand up with his hands. Then he rose up agitated, and traced the outline again. "Great Heaven!" said he, "why it is a ship."

"A ship!"

"Ay," said he, standing in the middle of it; "here, beneath our feet, lies man; with his work, and his treasures. This carcass has been here for many a long year; not so very long neither; she is too big for the 16th century, and yet she must have been sunk when the island was smaller. I take it to be a Spanish or Portuguese ship: probably one of those treasure-ships our commodores, and chartered pirates, and the American buccaneers, used to chase about these seas. Here lie her bones, and the bones of her crew. Your question was soon answered. All that we can say has been said; can do has been done; can suffer has been suffered."

They were silent, and the sunk ship's bones moved them strangely. In their deep isolation from the human race, even the presence of the dead brought humanity somehow nearer to them.

They walked thoughtfully away, and made across the sands for Telegraph Point.

Before they got home, Helen suggested that perhaps, if he were to dig in the ship, he might find something useful.

He shook his head. "Impossible! The iron has all melted away like sugar long before this. Nothing can have survived but gold and silver, and they are not worth picking up, much less digging for; my time is too precious. No, you have found two buried treasures to-day, — turtles' eggs, and a ship, freighted, as I think, with what men call the precious metals. Well, the eggs are gold, and the gold is a drug, — there it will lie for me."

Both discoveries bore fruits. The ship: Hazel made a vow that never again should any poor ship lay her ribs on this island for want of warning. He buoyed the reefs. He ran out to White Water Island, and wrote an earnest warning on the black reef, and, this time, he wrote with white on black. He wrote a similar warning, with black on white, at the western extremity of Godsend Island.

The eggs: Hazel watched for the turtles at daybreak; turned one now and then; and fed Helen on the meat or its eggs, morn, noon, and night.

For some time she had been advancing in health and strength. But, when the rains declined considerably, and she was all day in the air, she got the full benefit of the wonderful climate, and her health, appetite, and muscular vigor became truly astonishing; especially under what Hazel called the turtle cure; though, indeed, she was cured before. She ate three good meals a day, and needed them; for she was up with the sun, and her hands and feet never idle till he set.

Four months on the island had done this. But four months had not shown those straining eyes the white speck on the horizon; the sail, so looked and longed for.

Hazel often walked the island by himself; not to explore, for he knew the place well by this time, but he went his rounds to see that all his signals were in working order.

He went to Mount Look-out one day with this view. It was about an hour before noon. Long before he got to the mountain he had scanned the horizon carefully, as a matter of course; but not a speck. So, when he got there, he did not look seaward, but just saw that his flagstaff was all right and was about to turn away and go home, when he happened to glance at the water; and there, underneath him, he saw — a ship; standing towards the island.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

He started, and rubbed his eyes, and looked again. It was no delusion. Things never did come as they are expected to come. There was still no doubtful speck on the horizon; but within eight miles of the island — and in this lovely air that looked nearly close — was a ship, under canvas. She bore S.E. from Mount Look-out, and S.S.E. from the East Bluff of the island, towards which her course was apparently directed. She had a fair wind, but was not going fast; being heavily laden, and under no press of sail. A keen thrill went through him; and his mind was a whirl. He ran home with the great news.

But, even as he ran, a cold sickly feeling crawled over him.

"That ship parts her and me."

He resisted the feeling as a thing too monstrous and selfish, and resisted it so fiercely, that, when he got to the slopes and saw Helen busy at her work, he waved his hat and hurried again and again, and seemed almost mad with triumph.

Helen stood transfixed, she had never seen him in such a state.

"Good news!" he cried; "great news! A ship in sight! You are rescued!"

Her heart leaped into her mouth.

"A ship!" she screamed. "Where? Where?"

He came up to her, panting.

"Close under the island. Hid by the bluff; but you will see her in half an hour. God be praised! Get everything ready to go. Hurrah! This is our last day on the island."

The words were brave, and loud, and boisterous, but the face was pale and drawn, and Helen saw it, and though she bustled and got ready to leave, the tears were in her eyes. But the event was too great

to be resisted. A wild excitement grew on them both. They ran about like persons crazed, and took things up, and laid them down again, scarcely knowing what they were doing. But presently they were sobered a little, for the ship did not appear. They ran across the sands, where they could see the Bluff; she ought to have passed the half an hour ago.

Hazel thought she must have anchored.

Helen looked at him steadily.

"Dear friend," said she, "are you sure there is a ship at all? Are you not under a delusion? This island fills the mind with fancies. One day I thought I saw a ship sailing in the sky. Ah!" She uttered a faint scream, for, while she was speaking, the bowsprit and jib of a vessel glided past the Bluff so closely, they seemed to scrape it, and a ship emerged grandly, and glided along the cliff.

"Are they mad," cried Hazel, "to hug the shore like that? Ah! they have seen my warning."

And it appeared so, for the ship just then came up in the wind several points, and left the Bluff dead astern.

She sailed a little way on that course, and then paid off again, and seemed inclined to range along the coast. But presently she was up in the wind again, and made a greater offing. She was sailed in a strange, vacillating way; but Hazel ascribed this to her people's fear of the reefs he had indicated to all comers. The better to watch her manœuvres, and signal her, if necessary, they both went up to Telegraph Point. They could not go out to her, being low water. Seen from this height, the working of this vessel was unaccountable. She was to and off the wind as often as if she was drunk herself, or commanded by a drunken skipper. However, she was kept well clear of the home reefs, and made a good offing, and so at last she opened the bay heading N.W., and distant four miles, or thereabouts. Now was the time to drop her anchor. So Hazel worked the telegraph to draw her attention, and waved his hat and hand to her. But the ship sailed on. She yawed immensely, but she kept her course; and, when she had gone a mile or two more, the sickening truth forced itself at last upon those eager watchers. She had decided not to touch at the island. In vain their joyful signals. In vain the telegraph. In vain that cry for help upon the eastern cliff: it had saved her but not pleaded for them. The monsters saw them on the height, — their hope, their joy, — saw and abandoned them.

They looked at one another with dilating eyes, to read in a human face whether such a deed as this could really be done by man upon his fellow. Then they uttered wild cries to the receding vessel.

Vain, vain, all was in vain.

Then they sat down stupefied, but still glaring at the ship, and each at the same moment held out a hand to the other, and they sat hand in hand; all the world to each other just then, for there was the world in sight abandoning them in cold blood.

"Be calm, dear friend," said Helen, patiently. "O my poor father!" And her other hand threw her apron over her head, and then came a burst of anguish that no words could utter.

At this Hazel started to his feet in fury.

"Now may the God that made sea and land judge between those miscreants there and you!"

"Be patient," said Helen, sobbing. "O be patient."

"No! I will not be patient," roared Hazel

"Judge thou her cause, O God; each of these tears against a reptile's soul."

And so he stood glaring, and his hair blowing wildly to the breeze; while she sighed patiently at his knee.

Presently he began to watch the vessel with a grim and bitter eye. Anon he burst out suddenly, "Aha! that is right. Well steered. Don't cry, sweet one; our cause is heard. Are they blind? Are they drunk? Are they sick? I see nobody on deck! Perhaps I have been too—God forgive me, the ship's ashore!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HELEN looked up; and there was the ship fast, and on her side. She was on the White Water Reef. Not upon the black rocks themselves, but on a part of them that was under water.

Hazel ran down to the beach; and there Helen found him greatly agitated. All his anger was gone; he had but one thought now, — to go out to her assistance. But it still wanted an hour to high water, and it was blowing smartly, and there was nearly always a surf upon that reef. What if the vessel should break up, and lives be lost?

He paced the sands like a wild beast in its cage, in an agony of pity, remorse, and burning impatience. His feelings became intolerable; he set his back to the boat, and with herculean strength forced it down a little way to meet the tide. He got logs and put them down for rollers. He strove, he strained, he struggled, till his face and hands were purple. And at last he met the flowing tide, and in a moment, jumped into the boat, and pushed off. Helen begged with sparkling eyes to be allowed to accompany him.

"What, to a ship smitten with scurvy or Heaven knows what? Certainly not. Besides, you would be wet through; it is blowing rather fresh, and I shall carry on. Pray for the poor souls I go to help; and for me, who have sinned in my anger."

He hoisted his sail, and ran out.

Helen stood on the bank, and watched him with tender admiration. How good and brave he was! And he could go into a passion too, when she was wronged, or when he thought she was. Well! she admired him none the less for that. She watched him at first with admiration, but soon with anxiety; for he had no sooner passed North Gate, than the cutter having both sails set, though reefed, lay down very much and her hull kept disappearing. Helen felt anxious, and would have been downright frightened, but for her confidence in his prowess.

By and by only her staggering sails were visible; and the sun set ere she reached the creek. The wind declined with the sun, and Helen made two great fires, and prepared food for the sufferers; for she made sure Hazel would bring them off in a few hours more. She promised herself the happiness of relieving the distressed. But to her infinite surprise she found herself almost regretting that the island was likely to be peopled with strangers. No matter, she should sit up for them all night, and be very kind to them, poor things; though they had not been very kind to her.

About midnight, the wind shifted to the north-west, and blew hard.

Helen ran down to the shore, and looked seaward. This was a fair wind for Hazel's return; and she began to expect him every hour. But no; he delayed unaccountably.

And the worst of it was, it began to blow a gale; and this wind sent the sea rolling into the bay in a manner that alarmed her seriously.

The night wore on; no signs of the boat; and now there was a heavy gale outside, and a great sea rolling in, brown and foaming.

Day broke, and showed the sea for a mile or two; the rest was hidden by driving rain.

Helen kneeled on the shore and prayed for him. Dire misgivings oppressed her. And soon these were heightened to terror; for the sea began to disgorge things of a kind that had never come ashore before. A great ship's mast came tossing: huge as it was, the waves handled it like a toy. Then came a barrel; then a broken spar. These were but the forerunners of more fearful havoc.

The sea became strewed and literally blackened with fragments; part wreck, part cargo of a broken vessel.

But what was all this compared with the horror that followed?

A black object caught her eye; driven in upon the crest of a wave.

She looked, with her hair flying straight back, and her eyes almost starting from her head.

It was a boat, bottom up; driven on, and tossed like a cork.

It came nearer, nearer, nearer.

She dashed into the water with a wild scream, but a wave beat her backward on the sand, and, as she rose, an enormous roller lifted the boat upright into the air, and breaking, dashed it keel uppermost on the beach at her side — empty!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HELEN uttered a shriek of agony, and her knees smote together, and she would have swooned on the spot but for the wind and the spray that beat against her.

To the fearful stun succeeded the wildest distress. She ran to and fro like some wild animal bereaved; she kept wringing her hands and uttering cries of pity and despair, and went back to the boat a hundred times; it held her by a spell.

It was long before she could think connectedly, and, even then, it was not of herself, nor of her lonely state, but only, Why did not she die with him? Why did she not die instead of him?

He had been all the world to her; and now she knew it. O, what a friend, what a champion, what a lover these cruel waves had destroyed?

The morning broke, and still she hovered and hovered about the fatal boat, with great horror-stricken eyes, and hair flying to the breeze; and not a tear. If she could only have smoothed his last moments, have spoken one word into his dying ear! But no! Her poor hero had died in going to save others; died thinking her as cold as the waters that had destroyed him.

Dead or alive he was all the world to her now. She went, wailing piteously, and imploring the waves to give her at least his dead body to speak to, and mourn over. But the sea denied her even that dismal consolation.

The next tide brought in a few more fragments of the wreck, but no corpse floated ashore.

Then at last, as the waves once more retired, leaving, this time, only petty fragments of wreck on the beach, she lifted up her voice, and almost wept her heart out of her body.

Such tears as these are seldom without effect on the mind: and Helen now began to rebel, though faintly, against despair. She had been quite crushed, at first, under the material evidence,—the boat driven empty by the very wind and waves that had done the cruel deed. But the heart is averse to believe calamity and especially bereavement; and very ingenious in arguing against that bitterness of all woes. So she now sat down and brooded, and her mind fastened with pathetic ingenuity on every circumstance that could bear a favorable construction. The mast had not been broken; how, then, had it been lost? The body had not come ashore. He had had time to get to the wreck before the gale from the north came on at all; and why should a fair wind, though powerful, upset the boat? On these slender things she began to build a superstructure of hope; but soon her heart interrupted the reasoning. "What would he do in my place? would he sit guessing while hope had a hair to hang by?" That thought struck her like a spur: and in a moment she bounded into action, erect, her lips fixed, and her eye on fire, though her cheek was very pale. She went swiftly to Hazel's store, and searched it; there she found the jib-sail, a boat-hook, some rope, and one little oar, that Hazel was making for her, and had not quite completed. The sight of this, his last work, overpowered her again; and she sat down and took it on her knees, and kissed it, and cried over it. And these tears weakened her for a time. She felt it, and had the resolution to leave the oar behind. A single oar was of no use to row with. She rigged the boat-hook as a mast; and fastened the sail to it; and, with this poor equipment, she actually resolved to put out to sea.

The wind still blew smartly, and there was no blue sky visible.

And now she remembered she had eaten nothing; that would not do. Her strength might fail her. She made ready a meal, and ate it almost fiercely, and by a pure effort of resolution; as she was doing all the rest.

By this time, it was nearly high-tide. She watched the water creeping up. Will it float the boat? It rises over the keel; two inches, three inches. Five inches water! Now she pushes with all her strength. No; the boat has water in it she had forgotten to bale out. She strained every nerve, but could not move it. She stopped to take breath, and husband her strength. But, when she renewed her efforts, the five inches were four, and she had the misery of seeing the water crawl away by degrees, and leave the boat high and dry.

She sighed, heart-broken, a while; then went home and prayed.

When she had prayed a long time for strength and wisdom, she lay down for an hour, and tried to sleep, but failed. Then she prepared for a more serious struggle with the many difficulties she had to encounter. Now she thanked God more than ever for the health and rare strength she had acquired in this island: without them she could have done nothing now. She got a clay platter, and baled the vessel nearly dry. She left a little water for ballast. She fortified herself with food, and put provisions and water on board the boat. In imitation of Hazel, she went and got two round logs, and as soon as the tide crawled up to four inches, she lifted the bow a little, and got a roller under. Then she went to the boat's stern, set her teeth, and pushed with a rush of excitement that gave her almost a man's strength.

The stubborn boat seemed elastic, and all but moved. Then instinct taught her where her true strength lay. She got to the stern of the boat, and setting the small of her back under the projecting gunwale, she gathered herself together and gave a superb heave, that moved the boat a foot. She followed it up, and heaved again with like effect. Then, with a cry of joy, she ran and put down another roller forward. The boat was now on two rollers: one more magnificent heave with all her zeal, and strength, and youth, and the boat glided forward. She turned and rushed at it as it went, and the water deepening, and a gust catching the sail, it went out to sea, and she had only just time to throw herself across the gunwale, panting. She was afloat. The wind was S.W., and before she knew where she was, the boat headed towards the home reefs, and slipped through the water pretty fast considering how small a sail she carried. She ran to the helm. Alas! the rudder was broken off above the water-line. The helm was a mockery, and the boat running for the reefs. She slackened the sheet and the boat lost her way, and began to drift with the tide, which luckily had not yet turned. She carried her hope.

Helen cast her eyes around for an expedient, and she unshipped the transoms, and by trailing over the side, and gradually slackening and hauling the sheet, she could make the boat crawl like a winged bird through the western passage. After that it soon got under the cliff, and drifted into two feet of water.

Instantly she tied a rope to the mast, got out into the water, and took the rope ashore. She tied it round a heavy barrel she found there, and set the barrel up, and heaped stones round it and on it, which, unfortunately, was a long job, though she worked with feverish haste; then she went round the point, sometimes wet and sometimes dry, for the little oar she had left behind, because it broke her heart to look at. Away with such weakness now! With that oar, his last work, she might steer if she could not row. She got it. She came back to the boat to recommence her voyage.

She found the boat all safe but in six inches of water, and the tide going out. So ended her voyage; four hundred yards at most, and then to wait another twelve hours for the tide.

It was too cruel: and every hour so precious; for, even if Hazel was alive, he would die of cold and hunger ere she could get to him. She cried like any woman.

She persisted like a man.

She made several trips, and put away things in the boat that could possibly be of use,—abundant provision, and a keg of water; Hazel's wooden spade to paddle or steer with; his basket of tools, &c. Then she snatched some sleep; but it was broken by sad and terrible dreams: then she waited in an agony of impatience for high-water.

We are not always the best judges of what is good for us. Probably these delays saved her own life. She went out at last under far more favorable circumstances,—a light westerly breeze, and no reefs to pass through. She was, however, severely incommoded with a ground-swell.

At first she steered with the spade as well as she could; but she found this was not sufficient. The current ran westerly, and she was drifting out of her course. Then she remembered Hazel's lessons, and made shift to fasten the spade to the helm, and then lashed the helm. Even this did not quite

so; so she took her little oar, kissed it, cried over it a little, and then pulled manfully with it so as to keep the true course. It was a muggy day, neither wet nor dry. White Water Island was not in sight from Godsend Island; but as soon as she lost the latter, the former became visible,—an ugly grinning reef, with an eternal surf on the south and western sides.

Often she left off rowing, and turned to look at it. It was all black and blank, except the white and fatal surf.

When she was about four miles from the nearest part of the reef, there was a rush and bubble in the water, and a great shark came after the boat. Helen screamed, and turned very cold. She dreaded the monster not for what he could do now; but for what he might have done. He seemed to know the boat, he swam so vigilantly behind it. Was he there when the boat upset with Hazel in it? Was it in his greedy maw the remains of her best friend must be sought. Her lips opened, but no sound. She shuddered and hid her face at this awful thought.

The shark followed steadily.

She got to the reef, but did not hit it off as she intended. She ran under its lee, lowered the little sail, and steered the boat into a nick where the shark could hardly follow her.

But he moved to and fro like a sentinel, while she landed in trepidation and secured the boat to the branches of a white coral rock.

She found the place much larger than it looked from Telegraph Point. It was an archipelago of coral reef incrustated here and there with shells. She could not see all over it, where she was, so she made for what seemed the highest part, a bleak, seaweedy mound, with some sandy hillocks about it. She went up to this, and looked eagerly all round.

Not a soul.

She called as loud as her sinking heart would let her.

Not a sound.

She felt very sick, and sat down upon the mound.

When she had yielded a while to the weakness of her sex, she got up, and was her father's daughter again. She set to work to examine every foot of the reef.

It was no easy task. The rocks were rugged and sharp in places, slippery in others; often she had to go about, and once she fell and hurt her pretty hands and made them bleed; she never looked at them, nor heeded, but got up and sighed at the interruption: then patiently persisted. It took her two hours to examine thus, in detail, one half the island: but at last she discovered something. She saw at the eastern side of the reef a wooden figure of a woman, and, making her way to it, found the figure-head, and a piece of the bow, of the ship, with a sail on it, and a yard on that. This fragment was wedged into an angle of the reef, and the seaward edge of it shattered in a way that struck terror to Helen, for it showed her how omnipotent the sea had been. On the reef itself she found a cask with its head stove in, also a little keg and two wooden chests or cases. But what was all this to her?

She sat down, again, for her knees failed her. Presently there was a sort of moan near her, and a seal splashed into the water and dived out of her sight. She put her hands on her heart, and bowed

her head down, utterly desolate. She sat thus for a long time indeed, until she was interrupted by a most unexpected visitor.

Something came sniffing up to her and put a cold nose to her hand. She started violently and both her hands were in the air in a moment.

It was a dog, a pointer. He whimpered and tried to gambol, but could not manage it; he was too weak. However, he contrived to let her see with the wagging of his tail, and a certain contemptuous twist of his emaciated body, that she was welcome. But, having performed this ceremony, he trotted feebly away, leaving her very much startled, and not knowing what to think; indeed, this incident set her trembling all over.

A dog saved from the wreck! Then why not a man? And why not that life? O, thought she, would God save that creature, and not pity my poor angel and me?

She got up animated with hope, and recommenced her researches. She now kept at the outward edge of the island, and so went all round till she reached her boat again. The shark was swimming to and fro, waiting for her with horrible pertinacity. She tried to eat a mouthful, but, though she was faint, she could not eat. She drank a mouthful of water, and then went to search the very small portion that remained of the reef, and to take the poor dog home with her, because he she had lost was so good to animals. Only his example is left me, she said; and with that came another burst of sorrow. But she got up and did the rest of her work, crying as she went. After some severe travelling she got near the northeast limit, and in a sort of gully she saw the dog, quietly seated high on his tail. She called him; but he never moved. So, then, she went to him, and, when she got near him, she saw why he would not come. He was watching. Close by him lay the form of a man nearly covered with seaweed. The feet were visible, and so was the face, the latter deadly pale. It was he. In a moment she was by him, and leaning over him with both hands quivering. Was he dead? No; his eyes were closed; he was fast asleep.

Her hands flew to his face to feel him alive, and then grasped both his hands and drew them up towards her panting bosom: and the tears of joy streamed from her eyes, as she sobbed and murmured over him, she knew not what. At that he awoke and stared at her. He uttered a loud ejaculation of joy and wonder, then taking it all in, burst into tears himself and fell to kissing her hands and blessing her. The poor soul had almost given himself up for lost. And to be saved, all in a moment, and by her!

They could neither of them speak, but only mingled tears of joy and gratitude.

Hazel recovered himself first; and rising somewhat stiffly, lent her his arm. Her father's spirit went out of her in the moment of victory, and she was all woman,—sweet, loving, clinging woman. She got hold of his hand as well as his arm, and clutched it so tight, her little grasp seemed velvet and steel.

"Let me feel you," said she: "but no words! no words!"

He supported his preserver tenderly to the boat, then, hoisting the sail, he fetched the east side in two tacks, shipped the sail and yard, and also the cask, keg, and boxes. He then put a great quantity

of loose oysters on board, each as large as a plate. She looked at him with amazement.

"What," said she, when he had quite loaded the boat, "only just out of the jaws of death, and yet you can trouble your head about oysters and things."

"Wait till you see what I shall do with them," said he. "These are pearl oysters. I gathered them for you, when I had little hope I should ever see you again to give them you."

This was an unlucky speech. The act, that seemed so small and natural a thing to him, the woman's heart measured more correctly. Something rose in her throat; she tried to laugh instead of crying, and so she did both, and went into a violent fit of hysterics that showed how thoroughly her nature had been stirred to its depths. She quite frightened Hazel; and, indeed, the strength of an excited woman's weakness is sometimes alarming to many natures.

He did all he could to soothe her; without much success. As soon as she was better he set sail, thinking home was the best place for her. She leant back exhausted, and, after a while, seemed to be asleep. We don't believe she was, but Hazel did; and sat, cold and aching in body, but warm at heart, worshipping her with all his eyes.

At last they got ashore; and he sat by her fire and told her all, while she cooked his supper and warmed clothes at the fire for him.

"The ship," said he, "was a Dutch vessel, bound from Batavia to Callao, that had probably gone on her beam ends, for she was full of water. Her crew had abandoned her; I think they underrated the buoyancy of the ship and cargo. They left the poor dog on board. Her helm was lashed a-weather a couple of turns, but why that was done, I cannot tell for the life of me. I boarded her; unshipped my mast, and moored the boat to the ship; fed the poor dog; rummaged in the hold, and contrived to hoist up a small cask of salted beef, and a keg of rum, and some cases of grain and seeds. I managed to slide these on to the reef by means of the mast and oar lashed together. But a roller ground the wreck farther on to the reef, and the sudden snap broke the rope, as I suppose, and the boat went to sea. I never knew the misfortune till I saw her adrift. I could have got over that by making a raft; but the gale from the north brought such a sea on us. I saw she must break up, so I got ashore how I could. Ah, I little thought to see your face again, still less that I should owe my life to you."

"Spare me," said Helen, faintly.

"What, must not I thank you even for my life?"

"No. *The account is far from even yet.*"

"You are no arithmetician to say so. What astonishes me most is, that you have never once scolded me for all the trouble and anxiety—"

"I am too happy to see you sitting there, to scold you. But, still I do ask you, to leave the sea alone, after this. The treacherous monster! O, think what you and I have suffered on it."

She seemed quite worn out. He saw that, and retired for the night, casting one more wistful glance on her. But at that moment she was afraid to look at him. Her heart was welling over with tenderness for the dear friend whose life she had saved.

Next morning Hazel rose at daybreak as usual, but found himself stiff in the joints, and with a pain in his back. The mat that hung at the opening of

Helen's cave was not removed as usual. She was on her bed with a violent headache.

Hazel fed Ponto, and corrected him. He was as present a civilized dog; so he made a weak run at the boobies and noddies directly.

He also smelt Tommy inquisitively, to learn was he an eatable. Tommy somehow divined the end of this sinister curiosity, and showed his teeth.

Then Hazel got a rope, and tied one end round his own waist, and one round Ponto's neck, and at every outbreak of civilization, jerked him sharply on to his back. The effect of this discipline was rapid; Ponto soon found that he must not make war on the inhabitants of the island. He was a docile animal, and, in a very short time, consented to make one of "the happy family," as Hazel called the miscellaneous crew that beset him.

Helen and Hazel did not meet till past noon; and, when they did meet, it was plain she had been thinking a great deal, for her greeting was so shy and restrained as to appear cold and distant to Hazel. He thought to himself, I was too happy yesterday, and she too kind. Of course it could not last.

This change in her seemed to grow rather than diminish. She carried it so far as to go and almost hide during the working hours. She made off to the jungle, and spent an unreasonable time there. She professed to be collecting cotton, and it must be admitted she brought a good deal home with her. But Hazel could not accept cotton as the only motive for this sudden separation.

He lost the light of her face till the evening. Then matters took another turn: she was too polite. Ceremony and courtesy appeared to be gradually encroaching upon tender friendship and familiarity: yet, now and then, her soft hazel eyes seemed to turn on him in silence, and say, forgive me all this. Then at those sweet looks, love and forgiveness poured out of his eyes. And then hers sought the ground. And this was generally followed by a certain mixture of stiffness, timidity, and formality, too subtle to describe.

The much-enduring man began to lose patience.

"This is caprice," said he. "Cruel caprice."

Our female readers will probably take a deeper view of it than that. Whatever it was, another change was at hand. Since he was so exposed to the weather on the reef, Hazel had never been free from pain; but he had done his best to work it off. He had collected all the valuables from the wreck, made a new mast, set up a rude capstan to draw the boat ashore, and cut a little dock for her at low water, and clayed it in the full heat of the sun; and, having accomplished this drudgery, he got at last to his labor of love; he opened a quantity of pearl oysters, fed Tommy and the duck with them, and began the great work of lining the cavern with them. The said cavern was somewhat shell-shaped, and his idea was to make it out of a gloomy cavern into a vast shell, lined entirely, roof and sides, with glorious, sweet, prismatic, mother-of-pearl, fresh from ocean. Well, one morning, while Helen was in the jungle, he made a cement of guano, sand, clay, and water, nipped some shells to a shape with the pin-cers, and cemented them neatly, like Mosaic almost; but in the middle of his work he was cut down by the disorder he had combated so stoutly. He fairly gave in, and sat down groaning with pain. And in this state Helen found him.

"O, what is the matter?" said she.

He told her the truth and said he had violent pains

on the back and head. She did not say much, but she turned pale. She bustled and lighted a great fire, and made him lie down by it. She propped his head up; she set water on to boil for him, and would not let him move for anything; and all the time her features were brimful of the liveliest concern. He could not help thinking how much better it was to be ill and in pain, and have her so kind, than to be well, and see her cold and distant. Towards evening he got better, or rather he mistook an intermission for cure, and retired to his boat; but she made him take her rug with him; and, when he was gone, she could not sleep for anxiety; and it cut her to the heart to think how poorly he was lodged compared with her.

Of all the changes fate could bring, this she had never dreamed of, that she should be so robust, and he should be sick and in pain.

She passed an uneasy, restless night, and long before morning she awoke for the sixth or seventh time, and she awoke with a misgiving in her mind, and some sound ringing in her ears. She listened and heard nothing; but in a few moments it began again.

It was Hazel talking, — talking in a manner so fast, so strange, so loud, that it made her blood run cold. It was the voice of Hazel, but not his mind.

She drew near, and, to her dismay, found him fever-stricken, and pouring out words with little sequence. She came close to him and tried to soothe him, but he answered her quite at random, and went on flinging out the strangest things in stranger order. She trembled and waited for a lull, hoping then to soothe him with soft words and tones of tender pity.

"*Dens and caves!*" he roared, answering an imaginary detractor. "Well, never mind, love shall make that hole in the rock a palace for a queen; for a queen? For the queen." Here he suddenly changed characters and fancied he was interpreting the discourse of another. "He means the Queen of the Fairies," said he, patronizingly; then, resuming his own character with loud defiance, "I say her chamber shall outshine the glories of the Alhambra, as far as the lilies outshone the artificial glories of King Solomon. O mighty Nature, let others rely on the painter, the gold-beater, the carver of marble, come you and help me adorn the temple of my beloved. Amen."

(The poor soul thought, by the sound of his own words, it must be a prayer he had uttered.)

And now Helen, with streaming eyes, tried to put in a word, but he stopped her with a wild hush! and went off into a series of mysterious whisperings. "Make no noise, please, or we shall frighten her. There — that is her window — no noise, please! I've watched and waited four hours, just to see her sweet, darling shadow on the blinds, and shall I lose it for your small talk? all paradoxes and platitudes! excuse my plain speaking — hush! here it comes, — her shadow — hush — how my heart beats. It is gone. So now" (speaking out), "Good night, base world! Do you hear? you company of liars, thieves, and traitors, called the world, go and sleep if you can. *I shall sleep: because my conscience is clear. False accusations!* Who can help them? They are the act of others. Read of Job, and Paul, and Joan of Arc. No, no, no, no; I did n't say read 'em out with those stentorian lungs. I must be allowed a little sleep, a man that wastes the midnight oil, yet brushes the early dew. Good night."

He turned round and slept for several hours as he supposed; but in reality he was silent for just three seconds. "Well," said he, "and is a gardener a man to be looked down upon by upstarts? When Adam delved and Eve span, where was then the gentleman? Why, where the spade was. Yet I went through the Herald's College and not one of our mushroom aristocracy ('bloated' I object to; they don't eat half as much as their footmen) had a spade for a crest. There's nothing ancient west of the Caspian. Well, all the better. For there's no fool like an old fool. A spade's a spade for a that, an a that, an a that, an a that, — an a that, — an a that. Hallo! Stop that man; he's gone off on his cork leg, of a that, on a that, — and it is my wish to be quiet. Allow me respectfully to observe," said he striking off suddenly into an air of vast politeness, "that man requires change. I've done a jolly good day's work with the spade for this old Buffer, and now the intellect claims its turn. The mind retires above the noisy world to its Acropolis, and there discusses the great problem of the day: the Insular Enigma. To be or not to be, that is the question, I believe. No it is not. That is fully discussed elsewhere. Hum! To diffuse — intelligence — from a fixed island — over one hundred leagues of water.

"It's a stinger. But I can't complain. I had read Lempriere, and Smith and Bryant, and mythology in general: yet I must go and fall in love with the Sphinx. Men are so vain. Vanity whispered she will set you a light one; why is a cobbler like a king, for instance. She is in love with you, ye fool, if you are with her. The harder the riddle the higher the compliment the Sphinx pays you. That is the way all sensible men look at it. She is not the Sphinx: she is an angel, and I call her my Lady Caprice. *Hate her for being Caprice!* You incorrigible muddle head. Why, I love Caprice for being her shadow. Poor, impotent love that can't solve a problem. The only one she ever set me. I've gone about it like a fool. What is the use putting up little bits of telegraphs on the island? I'll make a kite a hundred feet high, get five miles of rope ready against the next hurricane; and then I'll rub it with phosphorus and fly it. But what can I fasten it to? No tree would hold it. Duncel! To the island itself, of course. And now go to Stantle, Magg, Melton, and Copestake for one thousand yards of silk, — *Money! Money! Money!* Well, give them a mortgage on the island, and a draft on the galleon. Now stop the pitch-fountain, and bore a hole near it; fill fifty balloons with gas, inscribe them with the latitude and longitude, fly them, and bring all the world about our ears. The problem is solved. It is solved, and I am destroyed. She leaves me; she thinks no more of me. Her heart is in England."

Then he muttered for a long time unintelligibly; and Helen ventured near, and actually laid her hand on his brow to soothe him. But suddenly his muttering ceased, and he seemed to be puzzling hard over something.

The result came out in a clear articulate sentence, that made Helen recoil, and holding by the mast, cast an indescribable look of wonder and dismay on the speaker.

The words that so staggered her were these, to the letter.

"She says she hates reptiles. Yet she marries Arthur Wardlaw."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE very name of Arthur Wardlaw startled Helen, and made her realize how completely her thoughts had been occupied with another.

But add to that the strange and bitter epigram ! Or was it a mere fortuitous concurrence of words ?

She was startled, amazed, confounded, puzzled. And, ere she could recover her composure, Hazel was back to his problem again : but no longer with the same energy.

He said in a faint and sleepy voice : " ' He maketh the winds His messengers, and flames of fire His ministers.' Ah ! if I could do that ! Well, why not ? I can do anything she bids me, —

Graculus euriens oculum jussoris ibit."

And soon after this doughty declaration he dozed off, and forgot all his trouble for a while.

The sun rose, and still he slept, and Helen watched him with undisguised tenderness in her face ; undisguised now that he could not see it.

Ere long she had companions in her care. Ponto came out of his den, and sniffed about the boat ; and then began to scratch it, and whimper for his friend. Tommy swam out of the sea, came to the boat, discovered, Heaven knows how, that his friend was there, and, in the way of noises, did everything but speak. The sea-birds followed and fluttered here and there in an erratic way, with now and then a peck at each other. All animated nature seemed to be uneasy at this eclipse of their Hazel.

At last Tommy raised himself quite perpendicular, in a vain endeavor to look into the boat, and invented a whine in the minor key, which tells on dogs : it set Ponto off in a moment ; he sat upon his tail, and delivered a long and most deplorable howl.

" Everything loves him," thought Helen.

With Ponto's music Hazel awoke, and found her watching him, with tears in her eyes ; he said softly : " Miss Rolleston ! There is nothing the matter, I hope. Why am I not up getting things for your breakfast ? "

" Dear friend," said she, " why you are not doing things for me and forgetting yourself, is because you have been very ill. And I am your nurse. Now tell me what I shall get you. Is there nothing you could fancy ? "

No ; he had no appetite ; she was not to trouble about him. And then he tried to get up ; but that gave him such a pain in his loins, he was fain to lie down again. So then he felt that he had got rheumatic fever. He told her so ; but seeing her sweet anxious face, begged her not to be alarmed, — he knew what to take for it. Would she be kind enough to go to his arsenal and fetch some specimens of bark she would find there, and also the keg of rum.

She flew at the word, and soon made him an infusion of the barks in boiling water ; to which the rum was added.

His sweet nurse administered this from time to time. The barks used were of the cassia-tree, and a wild citron-tree. Cinchona did not exist in this island, unfortunately. Perhaps there was no soil for it at a sufficient elevation above the sea.

Nevertheless with these inferior barks they held the fever in check. But the pain was obstinate, and cost Helen many a sigh ; for if she came softly, she could often hear him moan ; and the moment he heard her foot, he set-to and whistled, for a blind ;

with what success may be imagined. She would have bought those pains, or a portion of them ; ay, and paid a heavy price for them.

But pain, like everything, intermits, and in those blessed intervals his mind was more active than ever, and ran a great deal upon what he called the Problem.

But she, who had set it him, gave him little encouragement now to puzzle over it.

The following may serve as a specimen of their conversation on that head.

" The air of this island," said he, " gives one a sort of vague sense of mental power. It leads to no result in my case : still, it is an agreeable sensation to have it floating across my mind that some day I shall solve the Great Problem. Ah ! if I was only an inventor ! "

" And so you are."

" No, no," said Hazel, disclaiming as earnestly as some people claim ; " I do things that look like acts of invention, but they are acts of memory. I could show you plates and engravings of all the things I have seemed to invent. A man who studies books instead of skimming them, can cut a dash in a desert island, until the fatal word goes forth, — invent ; and then you find him out."

" I am sure I wish I had never said the fatal word. You will never get well if you puzzle your brain over impossibilities."

" Impossibilities ! But is not that begging the question ? The measure of impossibilities is lost in the present age. I propose a test. Let us go back a century, and suppose that three problems were laid before the men of that day, and they were asked to decide which is the most impossible : 1st, to diffuse intelligence from a fixed island over a hundred leagues of water : 2d, to make the sun take in thirty seconds likenesses more exact than any portrait-painter ever took, — likenesses that can be sold for a shilling at fifty per cent profit : 3d, for New York and London to exchange words by wire so much faster than the earth can turn, that London shall tell New York at ten on Monday morning what was the price of consols at two o'clock Monday afternoon."

" That is a story," said Helen, with a look of angelic reproach.

" I accept that reply," said Hazel. " As for me, I have got a smattering of so many subjects, all full of incredible truths, that my faith in the impossibility of anything is gone. Ah ! if James Watt was only here instead of John Hazel, — James Watt from the Abbey with a head as big as a pumpkin, — he would not have gone groping about the island, writing on rocks, and erecting signals. No ; he would have had some grand and bold idea worthy of the proposition."

" Well, so I think," said Helen, archly ; " that great man with a great head would have begun by making a kite a hundred yards high."

" Would he ? Well, he was quite capable of it."

" Yes ; and rubbed it with phosphorus, and flown it the first tempest, and made the string fast to — the island itself."

" Well, that is an idea," said Hazel, staring ; " rather hyperbolic, I fear. But after all, it is an idea."

" Or else," continued Helen, " he would weave a thousand yards of some light fabric, and make balloons ; then he would stop the pitch-fountain, bore a hole in the rock near it, and so get the gas, fill the balloons, inscribe them with our sad story

and our latitude and longitude, and send them flying all over the ocean, — there!"

Hazel was amazed.

"I resign my functions to you," said he. "What imagination! What invention!"

"O dear no," said Helen, slyly; "acts of memory sometimes pass for invention, you know. Shall I tell you? when first you fell ill, you were rather light-headed, and uttered the strangest things. They would have made me laugh heartily, only I could n't, — for crying. And you said that about kites and balloons, every word."

"Did I? then I have most brains when I have least reason, that's all."

"Ay," said Helen, "and other strange things, — very strange and bitter things. One I should like to ask you about, what on earth you could mean by it; but perhaps you meant nothing after all."

"I'll soon tell you," said Hazel; but he took the precaution to add, "Provided I know what it means myself."

She looked at him steadily, and was on the point of seeking the explanation so boldly offered; but her own courage failed her. She colored and hesitated.

"I shall wait," said she, "till you are quite, quite well. That will be soon, I hope; only you must be good, and obey my prescriptions. Cultivate patience; it is a wholesome plant; bow the pride of that intellect which you see a fever can lay low in an hour: aspire no more beyond the powers of man. Here we shall stay unless Providence sends us a ship. I have ceased to repine: and don't you begin. Dismiss that problem altogether; see how hot it has made your poor brow. Be good now, and dismiss it; or else do as I do, — fold it up, put it quietly away in a corner of your mind, and, when you least expect, it will pop out solved."

[O, comfortable doctrine! But how about Jamie Watt's headaches? And why are the signs of hard thoughts so much stronger in his brow and face than in Shakespeare's? Mercy on us, there is another problem.]

Hazel smiled, well-pleased, and leaned back, soothed, silenced, subdued, by her soft voice, and the exquisite touch of her velvet hand on his hot brow; for, woman-like, she laid her hand like down on that burning brow to aid her words in soothing it. Nor did it occur to him just then that this admonition delivered with a kind maternal hand, maternal voice, came from the same young lady who had flown at him like a wild cat with this very problem in her mouth. She mesmerized him, problem and all; he subsided into a complacent languor, and at last went to sleep, thinking only of her. But the topic had entered his mind too deeply to be finally dismissed. It returned next day, though in a different form. You must know that Hazel, as he lay on his back in the boat, had often, in a half-drowsy way, watched the effect of the sun upon the boat's mast: it now stood, a bare pole, and at certain hours acted like the needle of a dial, by casting a shadow on the sands. Above all, he could see pretty well by means of this pole and its shadow when the sun attained its greatest elevation. He now asked Miss Rolleston to assist him in making this observation exactly.

She obeyed his instructions, and the moment the shadow reached its highest angle, and showed the minutest symptom of declension, she said, "Now," and Hazel called out in a loud voice —

"Noon!"

"And forty-nine minutes past eight at Sydney," said Helen, holding out her chronometer; for she had been sharp enough to get it ready of her own accord.

Hazel looked at her and at the watch with amazement and incredulity.

"What?" said he. "Impossible. You can't have kept Sydney time all this while."

"And pray why not?" said Helen. "Have you forgotten that once somebody praised me for keeping Sydney time; it helped you, somehow or other, to know where we were."

"And so it will now," cried Hazel, exultingly. "But no! it is impossible. We have gone through scenes that — you can't have wound that watch up without missing a day."

"Indeed but I have," said Helen. "Not wind my watch up! Why, if I was dying I should wind my watch up. See, it requires no key; a touch or two of the fingers and it is done. O, I am remarkably constant in all my habits; and this is an old friend I never neglect. Do you remember that terrible night in the boat, when neither of us expected to see the morning, — O, how good and brave you were! — well, I remember winding it up that night. I kissed it, and bade it good by; but I never dreamed of not winding it up, because I was going to be killed. What! am I not to be praised again, as I was on board ship? Stingy! can't afford to praise one twice for the same thing."

"Praised!" cried Hazel, excitedly; "worshipped, you mean. Why, we have got the longitude by means of your chronometer. It is wonderful! It is providential! It is the finger of Heaven! Pen and ink, and let me work it out."

In his excitement he got up without assistance, and was soon busy calculating the longitude of Godsend Isle.

CHAPTER XL.

"THERE," said he. "Now the latitude I must guess at by certain combinations. In the first place the slight variation in the length of the days. Then I must try and make a rough calculation of the sun's parallax. And then my botany will help me a little; spices furnish a clew; there are one or two that will not grow outside the tropic. It was the longitude that beat me, and now we have conquered it. Hurrah! Now I know what to diffuse, and in what direction; east, southeast; the ducks have shown me that much. So there's the first step towards the impossible problem."

"Very well," said Helen; "and I am sure one step is enough for one day. I forbid you the topic for twelve hours at least. I detest it because it always makes your poor head so hot."

"What on earth does that matter?" said Hazel, impetuously, and almost crossly.

"Come, come, come, sir," said Helen, authoritatively; "it matters to me."

But when she saw that he could think of nothing else, and that opposition irritated him, she had the tact and good sense not to strain her authority, nor to irritate her subject.

Hazel spliced a long, fine-pointed stick to the mast-head, and set a plank painted white with guano at right angles to the base of the mast; and so whenever the sun attained his meridian altitude, went into a difficult and subtle calculation to arrive

at the latitude, or as near it as he could without proper instruments; and he brooded and brooded over his discovery of the longitude, but unfortunately he could not advance. In some problems the first step once gained leads, or at least points to the next; but to know whereabouts they were, and to let others know it, were two difficulties heterogeneous and distinct.

Having thought and thought till his head was dizzy, at last he took Helen's advice and put it by for a while. He set himself to fit and number a quantity of pearl oyster shells, so that he might be able to place them at once, when he should be able to recommence his labor of love in the cavern.

One day Helen had left him so employed, and was busy cooking the dinner at her own place, but, mind you, with one eye on the dinner and another on her patient, when suddenly she heard him shouting very loud, and ran out to see what was the matter.

He was roaring like mad, and whirling his arms over his head like a demented windmill.

She ran to him.

"Eureka! Eureka!" he shouted, in furious excitement.

"O dear!" cried Helen; "never mind." She was all against her patient exciting himself.

But he was exalted beyond even her control. "Crown me with laurel," he cried; "I have solved the problem": and up went his arms.

"O, is that all?" said she, calmly.

"Get me two squares of my parchment," cried he; "and some of the finest gut."

"Will not after dinner do?"

"No; certainly not," said Hazel, in a voice of command. "I would n't wait a moment for all the flesh-pots of Egypt."

Then she went like the wind and fetched them.

"O, thank you! thank you! Now I want,—let me see,—ah, there's an old rusty hoop that was washed ashore, on one of that ship's casks. I put it carefully away; how the unlikely things come in useful soon or late!"

She went for the hoop, but not so rapidly, for here it was that the first faint doubt of his sanity came in. However, she brought it, and he thanked her.

"And now," said he, "while I prepare the intelligence, will you be so kind as to fetch me the rushes."

"The what?" said Helen, in growing dismay.

"The rushes! I'll tell you where to find some."

Helen thought the best thing was to temporize. Perhaps he would be better after eating some wholesome food. "I'll fetch them directly after dinner," said she. "But it will be spoiled if I leave it for long; and I do so want it to be nice for you today."

"Dinner?" cried Hazel. "What do I care for dinner now. I am solving my problem. I'd rather go without dinner for years than interrupt a great idea. Pray let dinner take its chance, and obey me for once."

"For once!" said Helen, and turned her mild hazel eyes on him with such a look of gentle reproach.

"Forgive me! But don't take me for a child, asking you for a toy; I'm a poor crippled inventor, who sees daylight at last. O, I am on fire; and, if you want me not to go into a fever, why, get me my rushes."

"Where shall I find them?" said Helen, catching fire at him.

"Go to where your old hut stood, and follow the river about a furlong: you will find a bed of high rushes: cut me a good bundle, cut them below the water, choose the stoutest. Here is a pair of shears I found in the ship."

She took the shears and went swiftly across the sands and up the slope. He watched her with an admiring eye; and well he might, for it was the very poetry of motion. Hazel in his hours of health had almost given up walking; he ran from point to point, without fatigue or shortness of breath. Helen, equally pressed for time, did not run; but she went almost as fast. By rising with the dawn, by three meals a day of animal food, by constant work, and heavenly air, she was in a condition women rarely attain to. She was trained. Ten miles was no more to her than ten yards. And, when she was in a hurry, she got over the ground by a grand but feminine motion not easy to describe. It was a series of smooth undulations, not vulgar strides, but swift rushes, in which the loins seemed to propel the whole body, and the feet scarcely to touch the ground: it was the vigor and freedom of a savage, with the grace of a lady.

And so it was she swept across the sands and up the slope,

Et vera inossu patuit Dea.

While she was gone, Hazel cut two little squares of seals' bladder, one larger than the other. On the smaller he wrote: "An English lady wrecked on an island. Longitude, S., latitude between the and parallels. Haste to her rescue." Then he folded this small, and enclosed it in the larger slip, which he made into a little bag, and tied the neck extremely tight with fine gut, leaving a long piece of the gut free.

And now Helen came gliding back, as she went, and brought him a large bundle of rushes.

Then he asked her to help him fasten these rushes round the iron hoop.

"It must not be done too regularly," said he; "but so as to look as much like a little bed of rushes as possible."

Helen was puzzled still, but interested. So she set to work, and, between them, they fastened rushes all round the hoop, although it was a large one.

But, when it was done, Hazel said they were too bare.

"Then we will fasten another row," said Helen, good-humoredly. And, without more ado, she was off to the river again.

When she came back, she found him up, and he said the great excitement had cured him,—such power has the brain over the body. This convinced her he had really hit upon some great idea. And when she had made him eat his dinner by her fire, she asked him to tell her all about it.

But, by a natural reaction, the glorious and glowing excitement of mind, that had battled his very rheumatic pains, was now followed by doubt and dejection.

"Don't ask me yet," he sighed. "Theory is one thing; practice is another. We count without our antagonists. I forgot they will set their wits against mine: and they are many, I am but one. And I have been so often defeated. And, do you know, I have observed that whenever I say beforehand now I am going to do something clever, I am always defeated. Pride really goes before destruction, and vanity before a fall."

The female mind, rejecting all else, went like a

CHAPTER XLI.

needle's point at one thing in this explanation. "Our antagonists?" said Helen, looking sadly puzzled. "Why, what antagonists have we?"

"The messengers," said Hazel, with a groan. "The aerial messengers."

That did the business. Helen dropped the subject with almost ludicrous haste; and, after a few commonplace observations, made a nice comfortable dose of grog and bark for him. This she administered as an independent transaction, and not at all by way of comment on his antagonists, the aerial messengers.

It operated unkindly for her purpose: it did him so much good, that he lifted up his dejected head, and his eyes sparkled again, and he set to work, and, by sunset, prepared two more bags of bladder with inscriptions inside, and long tails of fine gut hanging. He then set to work, and, with fingers far less adroit than hers, fastened another set of rushes round the hoop. He set them less evenly, and some of them not quite perpendicular; and, while he was fumbling over this, and examining the effect with paternal glances, Helen's hazel eye dwelt on him with furtive pity; for, to her, this girdle of rushes was now an instrument, that bore an ugly likeness to the sceptre of straw, with which vanity run to seed sways imaginary kingdoms in Bedlam or Bice-tre.

And yet he was better. He walked about the cavern and conversed charmingly; he was dictionary, essayist, *raconteur*, anything she liked; and, as she prudently avoided and ignored the one fatal topic, it was a delightful evening: her fingers were as busy as his tongue: and, when he retired, she presented him with the fruits of a fortnight's work, a glorious wrapper made of fleecy cotton enclosed in a plaited web of flexible and silky grasses. He thanked her, and blessed her, and retired for the night.

About midnight she awoke and felt uneasy: so she did what since his illness she had done a score of times without his knowledge, she stole from her lair to watch him.

She found him wrapped in her present, which gave her great pleasure; and sleeping like an infant, which gave her joy. She eyed him eloquently for a long time; and then very timidly put out her hand, and, in her quality of nurse, laid it lighter than down upon his brow.

The brow was cool, and a very slight moisture on it showed the fever was going or gone.

She folded her arms and stood looking at him; and she thought of all they two had done and suffered together. Her eyes absorbed him, devoured him. The time flew by unheeded. It was so sweet to be able to set her face free from its restraint, and let all its sunshine beam on him: and even when she retired at last, those light hazel eyes, that could flash fire at times, but were all dove-like now, hung and lingered on him as if they could never look at him enough.

Half an hour before daybreak she was awakened by the dog howling piteously. She felt a little uneasy at that: not much. However she got up, and issued from her cavern, just as the sun showed his red eye above the horizon. She went towards the boat as a matter of course. She found Ponto tied to the helin: the boat was empty, and Hazel nowhere to be seen.

She uttered a scream of dismay.

The dog howled and whined louder than ever.

WARDLAW senior was not what you would call a tender-hearted man: but he was thoroughly moved by General Rolleston's distress, and by his fortitude. The gallant old man! Landing in England one week, and going back to the Pacific the next! Like goes with like; and Wardlaw senior, energetic and resolute himself, though he felt for his son, stricken down by grief, gave his heart to the more valiant distress of his contemporary. He manned and victualled the Springbok for a long voyage, ordered her to Plymouth, and took his friend down to her by train.

They went out to her in a boat. She was a screw steamer, that could sail nine knots an hour without burning a coal. As she came down the Channel, the General's trouble got to be well known on board her, and, when he came out of the harbor, the sailors by an honest, hearty impulse, that did them credit, waited for no orders, but manned the yards to receive him with the respect due to his services, and his sacred calamity.

On getting on board, he saluted the captain and the ship's company with sad dignity, and retired to his cabin with Mr. Wardlaw. There the old merchant forced on him by way of loan seven hundred pounds, chiefly in gold and silver, telling him there was nothing like money, go where you will. He then gave him a number of notices he had printed, and a paper of advice and instructions: it was written in his own large, clear, formal hand.

General Rolleston tried to falter out his thanks. John Wardlaw interrupted him.

"Next to you I am her father; am I not?"

"You have proved it."

"Well, then. However, if you do find her, as I pray to God you may, I claim the second kiss, mind that: not for myself, though; for my poor Arthur, that lies on a sick-bed for her."

General Rolleston assented to that in a broken voice. He could hardly speak.

And so they parted: and that sad parent went out to the Pacific.

To him it was indeed a sad and gloomy voyage; and the hope with which he went on board cooed gradually away as the ship traversed the vast tracks of ocean. One immensity of water to be passed before that other immensity could be reached, on whose vast, uniform, surface the search was to be made.

To abridge this gloomy and monotonous part of our tale, suffice it to say that he endured two months of water and infinity ere the vessel, fast as she was, reached Valparaiso. Their progress, however, had been more than once interrupted to carry out Wardlaw's instructions. The poor General himself had but one idea; to go and search the Pacific with his own eyes; but Wardlaw, more experienced, directed him to overhaul every whaler and coasting vessel he could, and deliver printed notices; telling the sad story, and offering a reward for any positive information, good or bad, that should be brought in to his agent at Valparaiso. Acting on these instructions they had overhauled two or three coasting vessels as they steamed up from the Horn. They now placarded the port of Valparaiso, and put the notices on board all vessels bound westward; and the captain of the Springbok spoke to the skippers in the port. But they all shook their heads, and could hardly be got to give their minds seriously to the inquiry when they heard in what water the cutter was last seen, and on what course.

One old skipper said, "Look on Juan Fernandez, and then at the bottom of the Pacific; but the sooner you look *there* the less time you will lose."

From Valparaiso they ran to Juan Fernandez, which indeed seemed the likeliest place; if she was alive.

When the larger island of that group, the island dear alike to you who read, and to us who write, this tale, came in sight, the father's heart began to beat higher.

The ship anchored and took in coal, which was furnished at a wickedly high price by Mr. Joshua Fuallove, who had virtually purchased the island from Chili, having got it on lease for longer than the earth itself is to last, we hear.

And now Rolleston found the value of Wardlaw's loan; it enabled him to prosecute his search through the whole group of islands; and he did hear at last of three persons, who had been wrecked on Masa Fuero; one of them a female. He followed this up and at last discovered the parties. He found them to be Spaniards, and the woman smoking a pipe.

After this bitter disappointment he went back to the ship, and she was to weigh her anchor next morning.

But while General Rolleston was at Masa Fuero, a small coasting vessel had come in, and brought a strange report at second-hand, that in some degree unsettled Captain Moreland's mind; and, being hotly discussed on the fore-castle, set the ship's company in a ferment.

CHAPTER XLII.

HAZEL had risen an hour before dawn for reasons well known to himself. He put on his worst clothes, and a leathern belt, his little bags round his neck, and took his bundle of rushes in his hand. He also provided himself with some pieces of raw fish and fresh oyster; and, thus equipped, went up through Terrapin Wood, and got to the neighborhood of the lagoons before daybreak.

There was a heavy steam on the water, and nothing else to be seen. He put the hoop over his head, and walked into the water, not without an internal shudder, it looked so cold.

But instead of that, it was very warm, unaccountably warm. He walked in up to his middle, and tied his iron hoop to his belt, so as to prevent it sinking too deep. This done, he waited motionless, and seemed a little bed of rushes. The sun rose, and the steam gradually cleared away, and Hazel, peering through a hole or two he had made expressly in his bed of rushes, saw several ducks floating about, and one in particular, all purple, without a speck but his amber eye. He contrived to detach a piece of fish, that soon floated to the surface near him. But no duck moved towards it. He tried another, and another; then a mallard he had not observed swam up from behind him, and was soon busy pecking at it within a yard of him. His heart beat; he glided slowly and cautiously forward till the bird was close to the rushes.

Hazel stretched out his hand with the utmost care, caught hold of the bird's feet, and dragged him sharply under the water, and brought him up within the circle of the rushes. He quacked and

struggled. Hazel coused him under directly, and so quenched the sound; then he glided slowly to the bank, so slowly that the rushes merely seemed to drift ashore. This he did not to create suspicion, and so spoil the next attempt. As he glided, he gave his duck air every now and then, and soon got on *terra firma*. By this time he had taught the duck not to quack, or he would get coused and held under. He now took the long gut-end and tied it tight round the bird's leg, and so fastened the bag to him. Even while he was effecting this, a posse of ducks rose at the west end of the mark, and took their flight from the island. As they passed, Hazel threw his captive up in the air; and such was the force of example, aided, perhaps, by the fright the captive had received, that Hazel's bird instantly joined these travellers, rose with them into the high currents, and away, bearing the new eastward upon the wings of the wind. Then Hazel returned to the pool, and twice more he was so fortunate as to secure a bird, and launch him into space.

So hard is it to measure the wit of man, and to define his resources. The problem was solved; the aerial messengers were on the wing, diffusing over hundreds of leagues of water the intelligence that an English lady had been wrecked on an unknown island, in longitude 103 deg. 30 min., and between the 32d and 25th parallels of south latitude; and calling good men and ships to her rescue for the love of God.

CHAPTER XLIII.

AND now for the strange report that landed at Juan Fernandez while General Rolleston was searching Masa Fuero.

The coaster who brought it ashore had been in company at Valparaiso, with a whaler from Nantucket, who told him he had fallen in with a Dutch whaler out at sea, and distressed for water: he had supplied the said Dutchman, who had thanked him, and given him a runlet of Hollands, and had told him in conversation that he had seen land and a river reflected on the sky, in waters where no land was marked in the chart; namely, somewhere between Juan Fernandez and Norfolk Island; and that, believing this to be the reflection of a part of some island near at hand, and his water being low, though not at that time run out, he had gone considerably out of his course in hopes of finding this watered island, but could see nothing of it. Nevertheless, as his grandfather, who had been sixty years at sea, and logged many wonderful things, had told him the sky had been known to reflect both ships and land at a great distance, he fully believed there was an island somewhere in that longitude, not down on any chart: an island wooded and watered.

This tale soon boarded the Springbok, and was hotly discussed on the fore-castle. It came to Captain Moreland's ears, and he examined the skipper of the coasting-smack. But this examination elicited nothing new, inasmuch as the skipper had the tale only at third hand. Captain Moreland, however, communicated it to General Rolleston on his arrival, and asked him whether he thought it worth while to deviate from their instructions upon information of such a character. Rolleston shook his head. "An island reflected in the sky!"

"No, sir: a portion of an island containing a river."

"It is clearly a fable," said Rolleston, with a sigh.

"What is a fable, General?"

"That the sky can reflect terrestrial objects."

"O, there I can't go with you. The phenomenon is rare, but it is well established. I never saw it myself, but I have come across those that have. Suppose we catechise the forecastle. My! Fok'sell!"

"Sir!"

"Send a man aft: the oldest seaman aboard."

"Ay, ay, sir."

There was some little delay: and then a sailor of about sixty slouched aft, made a sea scrape, and, removing his cap entirely, awaited the captain's commands.

"My man," said the captain, "I want you to answer a question. Do you believe land and ships have ever been seen in the sky, reflected?"

"A many good seamen holds to that, sir," said the sailor, cautiously.

"Is it the general opinion of seamen before the mast? Come, tell us. Jack's as good as his master in these matters."

"Could n't say for boys and lubbers, sir. But I never met a full-grown seaman as denied that there. Sartinly few has seen it: but all of 'em has seen them as has seen it; ships, and land, too; but mostly ships. Hows'ever, I had a messmate once as was sailing past a rock they call Ailsa Craig, and saw a regiment of soldiers marching in the sky. Logged it, did the mate; and them soldiers was a marching between two towns in Ireland at that very time."

"There, you see, General," said Captain Moreland.

"But this is all second-hand," said General Rolleston, with a sigh; "and I have learned how everything gets distorted in passing from one to another."

"Ah," said the captain, "we can't help that; the thing is rare. I never saw it for one; and I suppose you never saw a phenomenon of the kind, Isaac?"

"Ha'n't I!" said Isaac, grimly. Then, with sudden, and not very reasonable, heat, "D—— my eyes and limbs if I ha'n't seen the Peak o' Teneriffe in the sky topsy-turvy, and as plain as I see that there cloud there" (pointing upwards).

"Come," said Moreland; "now we are getting to it. Tell us all about that."

"Well, sir," said the seaman, "I don't care to larn them as laughs at everything they ha'n't seen in maybe a dozen voyages at most; but you know me, and I knows you; though you command the ship, and I work before the mast. Now I axes you, sir, should you say Isaac Aiken was the man to take a sugar-loaf, or a cocked hat, for the Peak o' Teneriffe?"

"As likely as I am myself, Isaac."

No commander can say fairer nor that," said Isaac, with dignity. "Well, then, your honor, I'll tell ye the truth, and no lie: We was bound for Teneriffe with a fair wind, though not so much of it as we wanted, by reason she was a good sea-boat, but broad in the bows. The Peak hove in sight in the sky and all the glasses was at her. She lay a

point or two on our weather-quarter like, full two hours, and then she just melted away like a lump o' sugar. We kept on our course a day and a half, and, at last, we sighted the real Peak, and anchored off the port; whereby, when we saw Teneriffe Peak in the sky to winnard, she lay a hundred leagues to looard, s' help me God!"

"That is wonderful," said General Rolleston.

"That will do, Isaac," said the captain. "Mr. Butt, double his grog for a week, for having seen more than I have."

The captain and General Rolleston had a long discussion; but the result was, they determined to go to Easter Island first, for General Rolleston was a soldier, and had learned to obey as well as command. He saw no sufficient ground for deviating from Wardlaw's positive instructions.

This decision soon became known throughout the ship; and she was to weigh anchor at 11 A.M. next day, by high water.

At eight next morning, Captain Moreland and General Rolleston being on deck, one of the ship's boys, a regular pet, with rosy cheeks and black eyes, comes up to the gentlemen, takes off his cap, and, panting audibly at his own audacity, shoves a paper into General Rolleston's hand, and scuds away for his life.

"This won't do," said the captain, sternly.

The high-bred soldier handed the paper to him unopened.

The captain opened it, looked a little vexed, but more amused, and handed it back to the General.

It was a ROUND ROBIN.

Round Robins are not ingratiating as a rule. But this one came from some rough but honest fellows, who had already shown that kindness and tact may reside in a coarse envelope. The sailors of the Springbok, when they first boarded her in the Thames, looked on themselves as men bound on an empty cruise; and nothing but the pay, which was five shillings per month above the average, reconciled them to it; for a sailor does not like going to sea for nothing, any more than a true sportsman likes to ride to hounds that are hunting a red herring trailed.

But the sight of the General had touched them afar off. His gray hair and pale face, seen as he rowed out of Plymouth Harbor, had sent them to the yards by a gallant impulse; and all through the voyage the game had been to put on an air of alacrity and hope, whenever they passed the General or came under his eye.

If hypocrisy is always a crime, this was a very criminal ship; for the men, and even the boys, were hypocrites, who, feeling quite sure that the daughter was dead at sea months ago, did, nevertheless, make up their faces to encourage the father into thinking she was alive, and he was going to find her. But people who pursue this game too long, and keep up the hopes of another, get infected at last themselves; and the crew of the Springbok arrived at Valparaíso infected with a little hope. Then came the Dutchman's tale, and the discussion, which ended adversely to their views; and this elicited the circular we have now the honor to lay before our readers.



General Rolleston and Captain Moreland returned to the cabin and discussed this document. They came on deck again, and the men were piped aft. General Rolleston touched his cap, and with the Round Robin in his hand, addressed them thus:—

"My men, I thank you for taking my trouble to heart as you do. But it would be a bad return to send any of you to Easter Island in that cutter: for she is not seaworthy: so the captain tells me. I will not consent to throw away your lives in trying to save a life that is dear to me: but, as to the Dutchman's story, about an unknown island, our captain seems to think that is possible; and you tell us you are of the same opinion. Well, then, I give up my own judgment, and yield to yours. Yes, we will go westward with a good heart (he sighed), and a willing crew."

The men cheered. The boatswain piped; the anchor was heaved, and the Springbok went out on a course that bade fair to carry her within a hundred miles of Godsend Island.

She ran fast. On the second day, some ducks passed over her head, one of which was observed to have something attached to its leg.

She passed within sixty miles of Mount Look-out; but never saw Godsend Island: and so pursued her way to the Society Islands; sent out her boats; made every inquiry around about the islands, but with no success; and, at last, after losing a couple of months there, brought the heart-sick father back on much the same course, but rather more northerly.

CHAPTER XLIV.

HAZEL returned homewards in a glow of triumph, and for once felt disposed to brag to Helen of his victory, — a victory by which she was to profit; not he.

They met in the wood; for she had tracked him by his footsteps. She seemed pale and disturbed, and speedily interrupted his exclamations of triumph by one of delight, which was soon, however, followed by one of distress.

"O, look at you!" she said. "You have been in the water: it is wicked; wicked."

"But I have solved the problem. I caught three ducks one after the other, and tied the intelligence

o their legs: they are at this moment careering over the ocean, with our story and our longitude, and a guess at our latitude. Crown me with bays."

"With foolscap, more likely," said Helen: "only just getting well of rheumatic fever, and to go and stand in water up to the middle."

"Why, you don't listen to me!" cried Hazel, in amazement. "I tell you I have solved the problem."

"It is you that don't listen to common sense," retorted Helen. "If you go and make yourself ill, all the problems in the world will not compensate me. And I must say I think it was not very kind of you to run off so without warning: why give me hours of anxiety for want of a word? But there, it is useless to argue with a boy: yes, sir, a boy. The fact is, I have been too easy with you of late. One indulges sick children. But then they must not slip away and stand in the water, or there is an end of indulgence; and one is driven to severity. You must be ruled with a rod of iron. Go home this moment, sir, and change your clothes; and don't you presume to come into the presence of the nurse you have offended, till there's not a wet thread about you."

And so she ordered him off. The inventor in his moment of victory slunk away crestfallen to change his clothes.

So far Helen Rolleston was a type of her sex in its treatment of inventors. At breakfast she became a brilliant exception. The moment she saw Hazel seated by her fire in dry clothes she changed her key, and made him relate the whole business, and expressed the warmest admiration and sympathy.

"But," said she, "I do ask you not to repeat this exploit too often; now, don't do it again for a fortnight. The island will not run away. Ducks come and go every day, and your health is very, very precious."

He colored with pleasure, and made the promise at once. But, during this fortnight, events occurred. In the first place, he improved his invention. He remembered how a duck, over-weighted by a crab, which was fast to her leg, had come on board the boat. Memory dwelling on this, and invention digesting it, he resolved to weight his next batch of ducks; for he argued thus: "Probably our ducks go straight from this to the great American Continent. Then it may be long ere one of them falls into the hands of a man; and perhaps that man will not know English. But, if I could impede the flight of my ducks, they might alight on ships: and three ships out of four know English."

Accordingly, he now inserted stones of various sizes into the little bags. It was a matter of nice calculation: the problem was to weight the birds just so much that they might be able to fly three or four hundred miles, or about half as far as their unencumbered companions.

But in the midst of all this, a circumstance occurred that would have made a vain man, or indeed most men, fling the whole thing away. Helen and he came to a rupture. It began by her fault, and continued by his. She did not choose to know her own mind, and, in spite of secret warnings from her better judgment, she was driven by curiosity or by the unhappy restlessness to which her sex are peculiarly subject at odd times, to sound Hazel as to the meaning of a certain epigram that rankled in her. And she did it in the most feminine way, that is to say, in the least direct: whereas the safest way

would have been to grasp the nettle, if she could not let it alone.

Said she one day, quietly, though with a deep blush: "Do you know Mr. Arthur Wardlaw?"

Hazel gave a shiver, and said "I do."

"Do you know anything about him?"

"I do."

"Nothing to his discredit, I am sure."

"If you are sure, why ask me? Do I ever mention his name?"

"Perhaps you do, sometimes, without intending it." "You are mistaken: he is in your thoughts, no doubt; but not in mine."

"Ought I to forget people entirely, and what I owe them?"

"That is a question I decline to go into."

"How harshly you speak to me? Is that fair? You know my engagement, and that honor and duty draw me to England; yet I am happy here. You, who are so good and strong, might pity me at least; for I am torn this way and that:" and here the voice ceased, and the tears began to flow.

"I do pity you," said Hazel: "I must pity any one who is obliged to mention honor and duty in the same breath as Arthur Wardlaw."

At this time Helen drew back, offended bitterly. "That pity I reject and scorn," said she. "No, I plighted my faith with my eyes open, and to a worthy object. I never knew him blacken any person who was not there to speak for himself, and that is a very worthy trait, in my opinion. The absent are like children; they are helpless to defend themselves."

Hazel racked with jealousy, and irritated at this galling comparison, lost his temper for once, and said those who lay traps must not complain if others fall into them.

"Traps! Who lay them?"

"You did, Miss Rolleston. Did I ever condescend to mention that man's name since we have been on the island? It is you make me talk of him."

"Condescend?"

"That is the word. Nor will I ever deign to mention him again. If my love had touched your heart, I should have been obliged to mention him, for then I should have been bound to tell you a story in which he is mixed, my own miserable story,—my blood boils against the human race when I think of it. But no, I see I am nothing to you; and I will be silent."

"It is very cruel of you to say that," replied Helen, with tears in her eyes; "tell me your story, and you will see whether you are nothing to me."

"Not one word of it," said Hazel, slowly, "until you have forgotten that man exists."

"Oh! thank you, sir, this is plain speaking. I am to forget honor and plighted faith; and then you will trust me with your secrets, when I have shown myself unworthy to be trusted with anything. Keep your secrets, and I'll try and keep faith; ay, and I shall keep it, too, as long as there's life in my body."

"Can't you keep faith without torturing me, who love you?"

Helen's bosom began to heave at this, but she fought bravely. "Love me less, and respect me more," said she, panting; "you affront me, you frighten me. I looked on you as a brother, a dear brother. But now I am afraid of you—I am afraid—"

He was so injudicious as to interrupt her, instead of giving her time to contradict herself. "You

have nothing to fear," said he; "keep this side of the island, and I'll live on the other, rather than hear the name of Arthur Wardlaw."

Helen's courage failed her at that spirited proposal, and she made no reply at all, but turned her back haughtily, and went away from him, only when she had got a little way her proud head drooped, and she went crying.

A coolness sprang up between them, and neither of them knew how to end it. Hazel saw no way to serve her now, except by flying weighted ducks; and he gave his mind so to this that one day he told her he had twenty-seven ducks in the air, all charged, and two thirds of them weighted. He thought that must please her now. To his surprise and annoyance, she received the intelligence coldly, and asked him whether it was not cruel to the birds.

Hazel colored with mortification at his great act of self-denial being so received.

He said, "I don't think my worst enemy can say I am wantonly cruel to God's creatures."

Helen threw in, deftly, "And I am not your worst enemy."

"But what other way is there to liberate you from this island, where you have nobody to speak to but me? Well, selfishness is the best course. Think only of others, and you are sure not to please them."

"If you want to please people, you must begin by understanding them," said the lady, not ill-naturedly.

"But if they don't understand themselves?"

"Then pity them; you can, for you are a man."

"What hurts me," said Hazel, "is that you really seem to think I fly these ducks for my pleasure. Why, if I had my wish, you and I should never leave this island, nor any other person set a foot on it. I am frank, you see."

"Rather too frank."

"What does it matter, since I do my duty all the same, and fly the ducks? But sometimes I do yearn for a word of praise for it; and that word never comes."

"It is a praiseworthy act," said Helen, but so icily that it is a wonder he ever flew another duck after that.

"No matter," said he, and his hand involuntarily sought his heart; "you read me a sharp but wholesome lesson, that we should do our duty for our duty's sake. And as I am quite sure it is my duty to liberate you and restore you to those you—I'll fly three ducks to-morrow morning instead of two."

"It is not done by my advice," said Helen. "You will certainly make yourself ill."

"O, that is all nonsense!" said Hazel.

"You are rude to me," said Helen, "and I am not aware that I deserve it."

"Rude, am I? Then I'll say no more," said Hazel, half humbly, half doggedly.

His parchment was exhausted, and he was driven to another expedient. He obtained alcohol by distillation from rum, and having found dragon's blood in its pure state, little ruby drops, made a deep red varnish that defied water; he got slips of bark, white inside, cut his inscription deep on the inner side, and filled the incised letters with this red varnish. He had forty-eight ducks in the air, and was rising before daybreak to catch another couple, when he was seized with a pain in the right hip and knee, and found he could hardly walk, so he gave in

that morning, and kept about the premises. But he got worse, and he had hardly any use in his right side, from the waist downwards, and was in great pain.

As the day wore on, the pain and loss of power increased, and resisted all his remedies; there was no fever to speak of; but Nature was grimly revenging herself for many a gentler warning neglected. When he realized his condition, he was terribly upset, and sat on the sand with his head in his hands for nearly two hours. But, after that period of despondency, he got up, took his boat-hook, and used it as a staff, hobbled to his arsenal, and set to work.

Amongst his materials was a young tree he had pulled up; the roots ran at right angles to the stem. He just sawed off the ends of the roots, and then proceeded to shorten the stem.

But meantime, Helen, who had always a keen eye on him and his movements, had seen there was something wrong, and came timidly and asked what was the matter.

"Nothing," said he, doggedly.

"Then why did you sit so long on the sand? I never saw you like that."

"I was ruminating."

"What upon? Not that I have any right to sit."

"On the arrogance and folly of men; they attempt more than they can do, and despise the petty prudence and common-sense of women, and smart for it; as I am smarting now for being wiser than you."

"O!" said Helen; "why, what is the matter? and what is that you have made? It looks like—O dear!"

"It is a crutch," said Hazel, with forced calmness; "and I am a cripple."

Helen clasped her hands, and stood trembling.

Hazel lost his self-control for a moment, and cried out in a voice of agony, "A useless cripple. I wish I was dead and out of the way."

Then, ashamed of having given way before her, he seized his crutch, placed the crook under his arm, and turned sullenly away from her.

Four steps he took with his crutch.

She caught him with two movements of her supple and vigorous frame.

She just laid her left hand gently on his shoulder, and with her right she stole the crutch softly away, and let it fall upon the sand. She took his right hand, and put it to her lips like a subject paying homage to her sovereign; and then she put her strong arm under his shoulder, still holding his right hand in hers, and looked in his face. "No wooden crutches when I am by," said she, in a low voice, full of devotion.

He stood surprised, and his eyes began to fill.

"Come," said she, in a voice of music. And, thus aided, he went with her to her cavern. As they went, she asked him tenderly where the pain was.

"It was in my hip and knee," he said: "but now it is nowhere; for joy has come back to my heart."

"And to mine too," said Helen; "except for this."

The quarrel dispersed like a cloud, under this calamity. There was no formal reconciliation; no discussion; and this was the wisest course: for the unhappy situation remained unchanged; and the friendliest discussion could only fan the embers of discord and misery gently, instead of fiercely.

The pair so strangely thrown together commenced a new chapter of their existence. It was not patient and nurse over again; Hazel, though very lame, had too much spirit left to accept that position. But still

the sexes became in a measure reversed,—Helen the fisherman and forager, Hazel the cook and domestic.

He was as busy as ever, but in a narrow circle; he found pearl oysters near the sunk galleon, and, ere he had been lame many weeks, he had entirely lined the sides of the cavern with mother-of-pearl set in cement, and close as mosaic.

Every day he passed an hour in Paradise; for his living crutch made him take a little walk with her; her hand held his; her arm supported his shoulder; her sweet face was near his, full of tender solicitude; they seemed to be one; and spoke in whispers to each other, like thinking aloud. The causes of happiness were ever present; the causes of unhappiness were out of sight, and showed no signs of approach.

And of the two, Helen was the happiest. Before a creature so pure as this marries and has children, the great maternal instinct is still there, but feels on what it can get,—first a doll, and then some helpless creature or other. Too often she wastes her heart's milk on something grown up, but as selfish as a child. Helen was more fortunate; her child was her hero, now so lame that he must lean on her to walk. The days passed by, and the island was fast becoming the world to those two, and as bright a world as ever shone on two mortal creatures.

It was a happy dream.

What a pity that dreams dissolve so soon! This had lasted for nearly two months, and Hazel was getting better, though still not well enough, or not fool enough, to dismiss his live crutch, when one afternoon Helen, who had been up on the heights, observed a dark cloud in the blue sky towards the west. There was not another cloud visible, and the air marvellously clear; time, about three quarters of an hour before sunset. She told Hazel about this solitary cloud, and asked him, with some anxiety, if it portended another storm. He told her to be under no alarm,—there were no tempests in that latitude except at the coming in and going out of the rains,—but he should like to go round the Point and look at her cloud.

She lent him her arm, and they went round the Point; and there they saw a cloud entirely different from anything they had ever seen since they were on the island. It was like an enormous dark ribbon stretched along the sky, at some little height above the horizon. Notwithstanding its prodigious length it got larger before their very eyes.

Hazel started.

Helen felt him start, and asked him, with some surprise, what was the matter.

"Cloud!" said he, "that is no cloud. That is smoke."

"Si-ke!" echoed Helen, becoming agitated in her turn.

"Yes; the breeze is northerly, and carries the smoke nearer to us; it is the smoke of a steamboat."

CHAPTER XLV.

BOTH were greatly moved; and after one swift glance Helen stole at him, neither looked at the other. They spoke in hurried whispers.

"Can they see the island?"

"I don't know; it depends on how far the boat is to windward of her smoke."

"How shall we know?"

"If she sees the island, she will make for it that moment."

"Why? do ships never pass an unknown island?"

"Yes. But that steamer will not pass us."

"But why?"

At this question Hazel hung his head, and his lip quivered. He answered her at last. "Because she is looking for you."

Helen was struck dumb at this.

He gave his reasons. "Steamers never visit these waters. Love has brought that steamer out; love that will not go unrewarded. Arthur Wardlaw is on board that ship."

"Have they seen us yet?"

Hazel forced on a kind of dogged fortitude. He said, "When the smoke ceases to elongate, you will know they have changed their course, and they will change their course the moment the man at the masthead sees us."

"Oh! But how do you know they have a man at the masthead?"

"I know by myself. I should have a man at the masthead night and day."

And now the situation was beyond words. They both watched, and watched, to see the line of smoke cease.

It continued to increase, and spread eastward; and that proved the steamer was continuing her course.

The sun drew close to the horizon.

"They don't see us," said Helen, faintly.

"No," said Hazel; "not yet."

"And the sun is just setting. It is all over." She put her handkerchief to her eyes a moment, and then, after a sob or two, she said almost cheerfully, "Well, dear friend, we were happy till that smoke came to disturb us: let us try and be as happy now it is gone. Don't smile like that, it makes me shudder."

"Did I smile? It must have been at your simplicity in thinking we have seen the last of that steamer."

"And so we have."

"Not so. In three hours she will be at anchor in that bay."

"Why, what will bring her?"

"I shall bring her."

"You? How?"

"By lighting my bonfire."

CHAPTER XLVI.

HELEN had forgotten all about the bonfire. She now asked whether he was sure those on board the steamer could see the bonfire. Then Hazel told her that it was now of prodigious size and height. Some six months before he was crippled he had added and added to it.

"That bonfire," said he, "will throw a ruddy glare over the heavens, that they can't help seeing on board the steamer. Then, as they are not on a course, but on a search, they will certainly run a few miles southward to see what it is. They will say it is either a beacon or a ship on fire; and, in either case, they will turn the boat's head this way. Well, before they have run southward half a dozen miles, their look-out will see the bonfire, and the island in its light. Let us get to the boat, my sacrificers are there."

She lent him her arm to the boat, and stood by while he made his preparations. They were very ample. He took a pine torch and smeared it all over with pitch; then put his lucifer-box in his bosom, and took his crutch. His face was drawn pitifully, but his closed lips betrayed unshaken and unshakable resolution. He shouldered his crutch, and hobbled up as far as the cavern. Here Helen interposed.

"Don't you go toiling up the hill," said she. "Give me the lucifers and the torch, and let me light the beacon. I shall be there in half the time you will."

"Thank you! thank you!" said Hazel, eagerly, not to say violently.

He wanted it done; but it killed him to do it. He then gave her his instructions.

"It is as big as a haystack," said he, "and as dry as a chip; and there are eight bundles of straw placed expressly. Light the bundles to windward first, then the others; it will soon be all in a blaze."

"Meanwhile," said Helen, "you prepare our supper. I feel quite faint—for want of it."

Hazel assented.

"It is the last we shall—" he was going to say it was the last they would eat together; but his voice failed him, and he hobbled into the cavern, and tried to smother his emotion in work. He lighted the fire, and blew it into a flame with a palmetto-leaf, and then he sat down awhile, very sick at heart; then he got up and did the cooking, sighing all the time; and, just when he was beginning to wonder why Helen was so long lighting eight bundles of straw, she came in, looking pale.

"Is it all right?" said he.

"Go and look," said she. "No, let us have our supper first."

Neither had any appetite: they sat and kept casting strange looks at one another.

To divert this anyhow Hazel looked up at the roof, and said faintly, "If I had known, I would have made more haste, and set pearl *there* as well."

"What does that matter?" said Helen, looking down.

"Not much, indeed," replied he, sadly. "I am a fool to utter such childish regrets; and, more than that, I am a mean selfish cur to *have* a regret. Come, come, we can't eat; let us go round the Point and see the waves reddened by the beacon that gives you back to the world you were born to embellish."

Helen said she would go directly. And her languid reply contrasted strangely with his excitement. She played with her supper, and wasted time in a very unusual way, until he told her plump she was not really eating, and he could wait no longer, he must go and see how the beacon was burning.

"O, very well," said she; and they went down to the beach.

She took his crutch and gave it to him. This little thing cut him to the heart. It was the first time she had accompanied him so far as that without offering herself to be his crutch. He sighed deeply, as he put the crutch under his arm; but he was too proud to complain, only he laid it all on the approaching steamboat.

The subtle creature by his side heard the sigh, and smiled sadly at being misunderstood,—but what man could understand her? They hardly spoke till they reached the Point. The waves

glittered in the moonlight: there was no red light on the water.

"Why, what is this?" said Hazel. "You can't have lighted the bonfire in eight places, as I said you."

She folded her arms and stood before him in an attitude of defiance; all but her melting eye.

"I have not lighted it at all," said she.

Hazel stood aghast. "What have I done?" he cried. "Duty, manhood, everything, demands that I should light that beacon, and I trusted in you."

Helen's attitude of defiance melted away: he began to cower, and hid her blushing face in her hands. Then she looked up imploringly. Then she uttered a wild and eloquent cry, and fled from him like the wind.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THAT cloud was really the smoke of the *Springbok*, which had mounted into air so thin that it could rise no higher. The boat herself was many miles to the northward, returning full of heavy hearts from a fruitless search. She came back in a higher parallel of latitude, intending afterwards to steer N.W. to Easter Island. The life was gone out of the ship; the father was deeply dejected, and the crew could no longer feign the hope they did not feel. Having pursued the above course to within four hundred miles of Juan Fernandez, General Rolleston begged the captain to make a bold deviation to the S.W., and then see if they could find nothing there before going to Easter Island.

Captain Moreland was very unwilling to go to the S.W., the more so as coal was getting short. However, he had not the heart to refuse General Rolleston anything. There was a northerly breeze. He had the fires put out, and, covering the ship with canvas, sailed three hundred miles S.W. But found nothing. Then he took in sail, got up steam again, and away for Easter Island. The ship ran so fast that she had got into latitude thirty-two by ten A.M. next morning.

At 10h. 15m. the dreary monotony of this cruise was broken by the man at the mast-head.

"On deck there!"

"Hullo!"

"The schooner on our weather-bow!"

"Well, what of her?"

"She has luffed."

"Well, what o' that?"

"She has altered her course."

"How many points?"

"She was sailing S.E., and now her head is N.E."

"That is curious."

General Rolleston, who had come and listened with a grain of hope, now sighed, and turned away.

The captain explained kindly that the man was quite right to draw his captain's attention to the fact of a trading-vessel altering her course. "There is a sea-grammar, General," said he; "and, when one seaman sees another violate it, he concludes there is some reason or other. Now, Jack, what d'ye make of her?"

"I can't make much of her: she don't seem to know her own mind, that is all. At ten o'clock she was bound for Valparaiso or the Island. But now she has come about and beating to windward."

"Bound for Easter Island?"

"I dunno."

"Keep your eye on her."

"Ay, ay, sir."

Captain Moreland told General Rolleston that very few ships went to Easter Island, which lies in a lovely climate, but is a miserable place; and he was telling the General that it is inhabited by savages of a low order, who half worship the relics of masonry left by their more civilized predecessors, when Jack hailed the deck again.

"Well," said the captain.

"I think she is bound for the Springbok."

The soldier received this conjecture with astonishment and incredulity, not to be wondered at. The steamboat headed N.W., right in the wind's eye. Sixteen miles off, at least, a ship was sailing N.E. So that the two courses might be represented thus:—



And there hung in the air, like a black mark against the blue sky, a fellow, whose oracular voice came down and said B was endeavoring to intercept A.

Nevertheless, time confirmed the conjecture; the schooner, having made a short board to the N.E., came about, and made a long board due west, which was as near as she could lie to the wind. On this Captain Moreland laid the steamboat's head due north. This brought the vessels rapidly together.

When they were about two miles distant, the stranger slackened sail and hove to, hoisting stars and stripes at her mizzen. The union jack went up the shrouds of the Springbok directly, and she pursued her course, but gradually slackened her steam.

General Rolleston walked the deck in great agitation, and now indulged in wild hopes, which Captain Moreland thought it best to discourage at once.

"Ah, sir," he said; "don't you run into the other extreme, and imagine he has come on our business. It is at sea as it is ashore: if a man goes out of his course to speak to you, it is for his own sake, not yours. This Yankee has got men sick with scurvy, and is come for lime-juice. Or his water is out. Or—hallo, savages aboard."

It was too true. The schooner had a cargo of savages, male and female; the males were nearly naked, but the females, strange to say, were dressed to the throat in ample robes, with broad and flowing skirts, and had little coronets on their heads. As soon as the schooner hove to, the fiddle had struck up, and the savages were now dancing in parties of four; the men doing a sort of monkey hornpipe in quick pace, with their hands nearly touching the ground; the women, on the contrary, erect and queenly, swept about in slow rhythm, with most graceful and coquettish movements of the arms and hands, and bewitching smiles.

The steamboat came alongside, but at a certain distance, to avoid all chance of collision; and the crew clustered at the side and cheered the savages dancing. The poor General was forgotten at the merry sight.

Presently a negro in white cotton, with a face blacker than the savages, stepped forward and hoisted a board, on which was printed very large
ARE YOU

Having allowed this a moment to sink into the mind, he reversed the board, and showed these words, also printed large, THE SPRINGBOK?

There was a thrilling murmur on board; and, after a pause of surprise, the question was answered by a loud cheer and waving of hats.

The reply was perfectly understood; almost immediately a boat was lowered by some novel machinery, and pulled towards the steamer. There were two men in it: the skipper and the negro. The skipper came up the side of the Springbok. He was loosely dressed in some light drab-colored stuff and a huge straw hat; a man with a long Puritanical head, a nose inclined to be aquiline, a face bronzed by weather and heat, thin, resolute lips, and a square chin. But for a certain breadth between his keen gray eyes, which revealed more intellect than Cromwell's Ironsides were encumbered with, he might have passed for one of that hard-praying, harder-hitting fraternity.

He came on deck, just touched his hat, as if to brush away a fly, and, removing an enormous cigar from his mouth, said, "Wal, and so this is the Springbok. Spry little boat she is: how many knots can ye get out of her now? Not that I am curious."

"About twelve knots."

"And when the steam's off the bile, how many can ye sail? Not that it is my business."

"Eight or nine. What is your business?"

"Hum! You have been over some water looking for that gal. Where do ye hail from last?"

"The Society Islands. Did you board me to hear me my catechism?"

"No, I am not one of your prying sort. Where are ye bound for now?"

"I am bound for Easter Island."

"Have you heard anything of the gal?"

"No."

"And when do ye expect to go back to England as wise as ye came?"

"Never while the ship can swim," cried Moreland, angrily, to hide his despondency from this stranger. "And now it is my turn, I think. What schooner is this? by whom commanded, and whither bound?"

"The Julia Dodd; Joshua Fullalove; bound for Juan Fernandez with the raw material of civilization—look at the varmint skippin'—and a printing-press; an' that's the instrument of civilization, I rather think."

"Well, sir; and why in Heaven's name did you change your course?"

"Wal, I reckon I changed it—to tell you a lie."

"To tell us a lie?"

"Ay; the darnedest eternal lie that ever came out of a man's mouth. Fust, there's an unknown island somewheres about. That's a kinder flourish beforehand. On that island there's an English gal wrecked."

Exclamations burst forth on every side at this.

And she is so tarnation 'cute, she is flying ducks all over creation with a writing tied to their legs, telling the tale, and setting down the longitude. There, if that is n't a buster, I hope I may never live to tell another."

"God bless you, sir," cried the General. "Where is the island?"

"What island?"

"The island where my child is wrecked."

"What, are you the gal's father?" said Joshua, with a sudden touch of feeling.

"I am, sir. Pray withhold nothing from me you know."

"Why, Cunnle," said the Yankee, soothingly; "don't I tell you it's a buster. However, the lie is none o' mine. It's that old cuss Skinfint set it afloat; he is always pisoning these peaceful waters."

Rolleston asked eagerly who Skinfint was, and where he could be found.

"Wal, he is a sorter sea Jack-of-all-trades, eternally cruising about to buy gratis, — those he buys of call it stealing. Got a rotten old cutter, manned by his wife and family. They get coal out of me fer fur, and sell the coal at double my price; they kill seals and dress the skins aboard; kill fish and salt 'em aboard. Ye know when that famly is at sea by the smell that pervades the briny deep an' heralds their approach. Yesterday the air smelt awful: so I said to Vespasian here, I think that sea-skunk is out, for there's something a pisoning the cerulean waves an' succumbambient air. We had n't sailed not fifty miles more before we run agin him. *Their clothes were drying all about the rigging.* Hails me, the varmint does. Vesp and I, we work the printing-press together, an' so order him to looward, not to taint our Otaheitan, that stink of ile at home, but I had 'em biled before I'd buy 'em, an' now they're vilets. 'Wal, now, Skinfint,' says I; 'I reckon you're come to bring me that harpoon o' mine you stole last time you was at my island?' 'I never saw your harpoon,' says he, 'I want to know, have you come across the Springbok?' 'Mebbe, I have,' says I; 'why do you ask?' 'Got news for her,' says he; 'and can't find her nowhere.' So then we set to and fenced a bit; and this old varmint, to put me off the truth, told me the buster. A month ago or more he was boarded — by a duck. And this yar duck had a writing tied to his leg, and this yar writing said an English gal was wrecked on an island, and put down the very longitude. 'Show me that duck,' says I, ironical. 'D'ye take us for fools?' says he; 'we ate the duck for supper.' 'That was like ye,' says I; 'if an angel brought your pardon down from heights celestial, you'd roast him, and sell his feathers for swan's-down; mebbe ye ate the writing? I know yar a hungry lot.' 'The writing is in my cabin,' says he. 'Show it me,' says I, 'an' mebbe I'll believe ye.' No, the cuss would only show it to the Springbok; 'there's a reward,' says he. 'What's the price of a soul aboard your cutter?' I asked him. 'Have you parted with yours, as you want to buy one?' says he. 'Not one as would carry me right slick away to everlasting blazes,' says I. So then we said good morning, and he bore away for Valparaiso. Presently I saw your smoke, and that you would never overhaul old Stinkamalee on that track; so I came about. Now I tell ye that old cuss knows where the gal is, and mebbe got her tied hand and fut in his cabin. An' I'm kinder sot on English gals; they put me in mind of butter and honey. Why, my schooner is named after one. So, now, Cunnle, clap on steam for Valparaiso, and you'll soon overhaul the old stink-pot: you may know him by the brown patch in his jib-sail, the ontidy varmint. Pull out your purse and bind him to drop lying about ducks and geese, and tell you the truth; he knows where your gal is, I swan. Wal, ye need n't smother me." For by this time he was the centre of a throng, all pushing and driving to catch his words.

Captain Moreland begged him to step down into

his cabin, and there the General thanked him with great warmth and agitation for his humanity. "We will follow your advice at once," he said. "Is there anything I can offer you, without fence?"

"Wal," drawled the Yankee, "I guess not. Business an' sentiment won't mix no how. Business took me to the island, sentiment brought me here. I'll take a shake hand all round: and if y' have got live fowls to spare, I'll be obliged to you for a couple. Ye see I'm colonizing that darned island: an' sowing in with grain, an' Otaheitan, an' nigger, an' Irishmen, an' all the cream o' creation; an' I'll be glad of a couple o' Dorkins to crow the lary varmint up."

This very moderate request was heartily complied with, and the acclamations and cheers of the crew followed this strange character to his schooner, at which his eye glistened and twinkled with quiet satisfaction, but he made it a point of honor not to move a muscle.

Before he could get under way, the Springbok took a circuit, and, passing within a hundred yards of him, fired a gun to leeward by way of compliment, set a cloud of canvas, and tore through the water at her highest speed. Outside the port of Valparaiso she fell in with Skinfint, and found him not quite so black as he was painted. The old fellow showed some parental feeling, produced the bag at once to General Rolleston, and assured him a wearied duck had come on board, and his wife had detached the writing.

They took in call: and then ran westward once more, every heart beating high with confident hope.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

HELEN's act was strange, and demands a word of explanation. If she had thought the steamboat was a strange vessel, she would have lighted the bonfire: if she had known her father was on board, she would have lighted it with joy. But Hazel, whose every word now was gospel, had said it was Arthur Wardlaw in that boat, searching for her.

Still, so strong is the impulse in all civilized beings to get back to civilization, that she went up that hill as honestly intending to light the bonfire as Hazel intended it to be lighted. But, as she went, her courage cooled, and her feet began to go slowly, as her mind ran swiftly forward to consequence upon consequence. To light that bonfire was to bring Arthur Wardlaw down upon herself and Hazel living alone and on intimate terms. Arthur would come and claim her to his face. Could she disallow his claim? Gratitude would now be on his side as well as good faith. What a shock to Arthur! What torture for Hazel! torture that he foresaw, or why the face of anguish, that dragged even now at her heart-strings? And then it could end only in one way; she and Hazel would leave the island in Arthur's ship. What a voyage for all three! She stood transfixed by shame; her whole body blushed at what she saw coming. Then once more Hazel's face rose before her; poor crippled Hazel! her hero and her patient. She sat down and sighed, and could no more light the fire than she could have put it out if another had lighted it.

She was a girl that could show you at times she

and a father as well as a mother: but that evening she was all woman.

They met no more that night.

In the morning his face was haggard, and showed a mental struggle; but hers placid and quietly beaming, for the very reason that she had made a great sacrifice. She was one of that sort.

And this difference between them was a fore-taste.

His tender conscience pricked him sore. To see her sit beaming there, when, if he had done his own duty with his own hands, she would be on her way to England! Yet his remorse was dumb; for, if he gave it vent, then he must seem ungrateful to her for her sacrifice.

She saw his deep and silent compunction, approved it secretly; said nothing, but smiled, and beamed, and soothed. He could not resist this: and wild thrills of joy and hope passed through him, visions of unbroken bliss far from the world.

But this sweet delirium was followed by misgivings of another kind. And here she was at fault. What could they be?

It was the voice of conscience telling him that he was really winning her love, once inaccessible; and, if so, was bound to tell her his whole story, and let her judge between him and the world, before she made any more sacrifices for him. But it is hard to stop great happiness: harder to stop it and ruin it. Every night, as he lay alone, he said, "To-morrow I will tell her all, and make her the judge." But in the morning her bright face crushed his purpose by the fear of clouding it. His limbs got strong and his heart got weak: and they used to take walks, and her head came near his shoulder: and the path of duty began to be set thicker than ever with thorns; and the path of love with primroses. One day she made him sit to her for his portrait; and under cover of artistic enthusiasm, told him his beard was godlike, and nothing in the world could equal it for beauty. She never saw but one at all like it, poor Mr. Seaton's; but even that was very inferior to his: and then she dismissed the sitter: "Poor thing," said she, "you are pale and tired." And she began to use ornaments: took her bracelets out of her bag, and picked pearls out of her walls, and made a coronet, under which her eyes flashed at night with superlative beauty,—conscious beauty brightened by the sense of being admired and looked at by the eye she desired to please.

She revered him. He had improved her character, and she knew it, and often told him so. "Call me Hazelia," she said; "make me liker you, still."

One day, he came suddenly through the jungle, and found her reading her prayer-book.

He took it from her, not meaning to be rude, neither, but inquisitive.

It was open at the marriage-service, and her cheeks were dyed scarlet.

His heart panted. He was a clergyman; he could read that service over them both.

Would it be a marriage?

Not in England: but in some countries it would. Why not in this? This was not England.

He looked up. Her head was averted; she was downright distressed.

He was sorry to have made her blush: so he took her hand and kissed it tenderly, so tenderly that his heart seemed to go into his lips. She thrilled under it, and her white brow sank upon his shoulder.

The sky was a vault of purple with a flaming topaz in the centre; the sea, a heavenly blue; the

warm air breathed heavenly odors; flaming macaws wheeled overhead; humming-birds, more gorgeous than any flower, buzzed round their heads, and amazed the eye with delight, then cooled it with the deep green of the jungle into which they dived.

It was a Paradise with the sun smiling down on it, and the ocean smiling up, and the air impregnated with love. Here they were both content now to spend the rest of their days—

"The world forgetting; by the world forgot"

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE Springbok arrived in due course at longitude 108 deg. 31 min. but saw no island. This was dispiriting; but still Captain Moreland did not despair.

He asked General Rolleston to examine the writing carefully, and tell him was that Miss Rolleston's handwriting.

The General shook his head sorrowfully.

"No," said he; "it is nothing like my child's hand."

"Why, all the better," said Captain Moreland; "the lady has got somebody about her who knows a thing or two. The man that could catch wild ducks and turn 'em into postmen could hit on the longitude somehow; and he does n't pretend to be exact in the latitude."

Upon this he ran northward 400 miles; which took him three days; for they stopped at night.

No island.

He then ran south 500 miles; stopping at night.

No island.

Then he took the vessel zigzag.

Just before sunset, one lovely day, the man at the mast-head sang out:—

"On deck there!"

"Hullo!"

"Something in sight; on our weather-bow."

"What is it?"

"Looks like a mast. No. Don't know what it is."

"Point."

The sailor pointed with his finger.

Captain Moreland ordered the ship's course to be altered accordingly. By this time, General Rolleston was on deck. The ship ran two miles on the new course; and all this time the topman's glass was levelled, and the crew climbed about the rigging all eyes and ears.

At last the clear hail came down.

"I can make it out now, sir."

"What is it?"

"It is a palm-tree."

The captain jumped on a gun, and waved his hat grandly, and instantly the vessel rang with a lusty cheer; and, for once, sailors gabbled like washer-women.

They ran till they saw the island in the moonlight, and the giant Palm, black, and sculptured out of the violet sky; then they set the lead going, and it warned them not to come too close. They anchored off the west coast.

At daybreak they moved slowly on, still sounding as they went; and, rounding the West Point, General Rolleston saw written on the guanoed rocks in large letters:—

AN ENGLISH LADY WRECKED HERE. HASTE TO HER RESCUE.

He and Moreland shook hands; and how their eyes glistened!

Presently there was a stranger inscription still upon the rocks, — a rough outline of the island on an enormous scale, showing the coast-line, the reefs, the shallow water, and the deep water.

"Ease her! Stop her!"

The captain studied this original chart with his glass, and crept slowly on for the west passage.

But, warned by the soundings marked on the rock, he did not attempt to go through the passage, but came to an anchor, and lowered his boat.

The sailors were all on the *qui vive* to land, but the captain, to their infinite surprise, told them only three persons would land that morning, — himself, his son, and General Rolleston.

The fact is, this honest captain had got a misgiving, founded on a general view of human nature. He expected to find the girl with two or three sailors, one of them united to her by some nautical ceremony, duly witnessed, but such as a *military* officer of distinction could hardly be expected to approve. He got into the boat in a curious state of delight, dashed with uncomfortable suspense; and they rowed gently for the west passage.

As for General Rolleston, now it was he needed all his fortitude. Suppose the lady was not Helen! After all, the chances were against her being there. Suppose she was dead and buried in that island! Suppose that fatal disease, with which she had sailed, had been accelerated by hardships, and Providence permitted him only to receive her last sigh. All these misgivings crowded on him the moment he drew so near the object, which had looked all brightness so long as it was unattainable. He sat, pale and brave, in the boat; but his doubts and fears were greater than his hope.

They rounded Telegraph Point, and in a moment Paradise Bay burst on them, and Hazel's boat within a hundred yards of them. It was half-tide. They beached the boat, and General Rolleston landed. Captain Moreland grasped his hand, and said, "Call us, if it is all right."

General Rolleston returned the pressure of that honest hand, and marched up the beach just as if he was going into action.

He came to the boat. It had an awning over the stern, and was clearly used as a sleeping-place. A series of wooden pipes standing on uprights led from this up to the cliff. The pipes were in fact mere sections of the sago-tree with the soft pith driven out. As this was manifestly a tube of communication, General Rolleston followed it until he came to a sort of veranda with a cave opening on it; he entered the cave, and was dazzled by its most unexpected beauty. He seemed to be in a gigantic nautilus. Roof and sides, and the very chimney, were one blaze of mother-of-pearl. But, after the first start, brighter to him was an old shawl he saw on a nail; for that showed it was a woman's abode. He tore down the old shawl, and carried it to the light. He recognized it as Helen's. Her rugs were in a corner; he rushed in, and felt them all over with trembling hands. They were still warm, though she had left her bed some time. He came out wild with joy, and shouted to Moreland, "She is alive! She is alive! She is alive!" Then fell on his knees and thanked God.

A cry came down to him from above: he looked up as he knelt, and there was a female figure dressed in white, stretching out its hands as if it would fly down to him. Its eyes gleamed; he

knew them all that way off. He stretched out his hands as eloquently, and then he got up to meet her; but the stout soldier's limbs were stiffer than of old; and he got up so slowly, that, ere he could take a step, there came flying to him with his screams and inarticulate cries, no living skeleton, nor consumptive young lady, but a grand creature, tanned here and there, rosy as the morn, and full of lusty vigor; a body all health, strength, and beauty, a soul all love. She flung herself all over him a moment, with cries of love unspeakable; and in it was "O my darling, my darling! O my own! Ha, ha, ha, ha! O, O, O, O! Is it you? is it? can it? Papa! Papa!" then little conservative hands patting him, and feeling his beard and shoulders; then a sudden hail of violent kisses on his head, his eyes, his arms, his hands, his knees. Then a stout soldier, broken down by this, and sobbing for joy. "O my child! My flesh and blood! O, O, O!" Then all manhood melted away except paternity; and a father turned mother, and clinging, kissing, and rocking to and fro with his child, and both crying for joy as if their hearts would burst.

A sight for angels to look down at and rejoice. But what mortal pen could paint it?

CHAPTER L.

THEY gave a long time to pure joy before either of them cared to put questions or compare notes. But at last he asked her, "Who was on the island besides her?"

"O," said she, "only my guardian angel. Poor Mr. Welch died the first week we were here."

He parted the hair on her brow, and kissed it tenderly. "And who is your guardian angel?"

"Why, you are now, my own papa: and well you have proved it. To think of your being the one to come, at your age!"

"Well, never mind me. Who has taken such care of my child? — this the sick girl they frightened me about!"

"Indeed, papa, I was a dying girl. My very hand was wasted. Look at it now; brown as a berry, but so plump; you owe that to him: and, papa, I can walk twenty miles without fatigue: and so strong; I could take you up in my arms and carry, I know. But I am content to eat you." (A shower of kisses.) "I hope you will like him."

"My own Helen. Ah! I am a happy old man this day. What is his name?"

"Mr. Hazel. He is a clergyman. O papa, I hope you will like him, for he has saved my life more than once: and then he has been so generous, so delicate, so patient; for I used him very ill at first; and you will find my character as much improved as my health: and all owing to Mr. Hazel. He is a clergyman; and O, so good, so humble, so clever, so self-denying! Ah! how can I ever repay him?"

"Well, I shall be glad to see this paragon, and shake him by the hand. You may imagine what I feel to any one that is kind to my darling. An old gentleman? about my age?"

"O no, papa."

"Hum!"

"If he had been old I should not be here; for he has had to fight for me against cruel men with knives: and work like a horse. He built me a hut,

and made me this cave, and almost killed himself in my service. Poor Mr. Hazel!"

"How old is he?"

"Dearest papa, I never asked him that: but I think he is four or five years older than me, and a hundred years better than I shall ever be, I am afraid. What is the matter, darling?"

"Nothing, child, nothing."

"Don't tell me. Can't I read your dear face?"

"Come, let me read yours. Look me in the face, now: full."

He took her by the shoulders, firmly, but not the least roughly, and looked straight into her hazel eyes. She blushed at this ordeal, — blushed scarlet; but her eyes, pure as Heaven, faced his fairly, though with a puzzled look.

He concluded this paternal inspection by kissing her on the brow. "I was an old fool," he muttered.

"What do you say, dear papa?"

"Nothing, nothing. Kiss me again. Well, love, you had better find this guardian angel of yours, that I may take him by the hand and give him a father's blessing, and make him some little return by carrying him home to England along with my darling."

"I'll call him, papa. Where can he be gone, I wonder."

She ran out to the terrace, and called, —

"Mr. Hazel! Mr. Hazel! I don't see him; but he can't be far off. Mr. Hazel!"

Then she came back, and made her father sit down: and she sat at his knee, beaming with delight.

"Ah, papa," said she, "it was you who loved me best in England. It was you that came to look for me."

"No," said he, "there are others there that love you as well in their way. Poor Wardlaw! on his sick-bed for you, cut down like a flower the moment he heard you were lost in the Proserpine. Ah, and I have broken faith."

"That is a story," said Helen; "you could n't."

"For a moment I mean; I promised the dear old man — he furnished the ship, the men, and the money, to find you. He says you are as much his daughter as mine."

"Well, but what did you promise him?" said Helen, blushing and interrupting hastily, for she could not bear the turn matters were taking.

"O, only to give you the second kiss from Arthur. Come, better late than never." She knelt before him, and put out her forehead instead of her lips.

"There," said the General, "that kiss is from Arthur Wardlaw, your intended. Why, who the deuce is this?"

A young man was standing wonder-struck at the entrance, and had heard the General's last words; they went through him like a knife. General Rolleston stared at him.

Helen uttered an ejaculation of pleasure, and said, "This is my dear father, and he wants to thank you —"

"I don't understand this," said the General. "I thought you told me there was nobody on the island but you and your guardian angel. Did you count this poor fellow for nobody? Why, he did you a good turn once."

"O papa!" said Helen, reproachfully. "Why, this is my guardian angel. This is Mr. Hazel."

The General looked from one to another in amazement, then he said to Helen, "This your Mr. Hazel?"

"Yes, papa."

"Why, you don't mean to tell me you don't know this man?"

"Know him, papa! why, of course I know Mr. Hazel; know him and revere him, beyond all the world, except you."

The General lost patience. "Are you out of your senses?" said he; "this man here is no Hazel. Why, this is James Seaton — our gardener — a ticket-of-leave man."

CHAPTER LI.

At this fearful insult Helen drew back from her father with a cry of dismay, and then moved towards Hazel with her hands extended, as if to guard him from another blow, and at the same time deprecate his resentment. But then she saw his dejected attitude; and she stood confounded, looking from one to the other.

"I knew him in a moment by his beard," said the General, coolly.

"Ah!" cried Helen, and stood transfixed. She glared at Hazel and his beard with dilating eyes, and began to tremble.

Then she crept back to her father and held him tight; but still looked over her shoulder at Hazel with dilating eyes and paling cheek.

As for Hazel, his deportment all this time went far towards convicting him; he leaned against the side of the cave, and hung his head in silence: and his face was ashy pale. When General Rolleston saw his deep distress, and the sudden terror and repugnance the revelation seemed to create in his daughter's mind, he felt sorry he had gone so far, and said, "Well, well; it is not for me to judge you harshly; for you have laid me under a deep obligation: and, after all, I can see good reasons why you should conceal your name from other people. But you ought to have told my daughter the truth."

Helen interrupted him; or, rather, she seemed unconscious he was speaking. She had never for an instant taken her eye off the culprit: and now she spoke to him:

"Who, and what, are you, sir?"

"My name is Robert Penfold."

"Penfold! Seaton!" cried Helen. "Alias upon alias!" And she turned to her father in despair. Then to Hazel again. "Are you what papa says?"

"I am."

"O papa! papa!" cried Helen, "then there is no truth nor honesty in all the world!" And she turned her back on Robert Penfold, and cried and sobbed upon her father's breast.

O the amazement and anguish of that hour! The pure affection and reverence, that would have blest a worthy man, wasted on a convict! Her heart's best treasures flung on a dunghill! This is a woman's greatest loss on earth. And Helen sank, and sobbed under it.

General Rolleston, whose own heart was fortified, took a shallow view of the situation; and, moreover, Helen's face was hidden on his bosom; and what he saw was Hazel's manly and intelligent countenance pale, and dragged with agony and shame.

"Come, come," he said, gently, "don't cry about it; it is not your fault: and don't be too hard on the man. You told me he had saved your life."

"Would he had not!" said the sobbing girl.

"There, Seaton," said the General. "Now you

see the consequences of deceit: it wipes out the deepest obligations." He resumed, in a different tone, "But not with me. This is a woman: but I am a man, and know how a bad man could have abused the situation in which I found you two."

"Not worse than he has done," cried Helen.

"What do you tell me, girl!" said General Rolleston, beginning to tremble in his turn.

"What could he do worse than steal my esteem and veneration, and drag my heart's best feelings in the dirt? O, where—where can I ever look for a guide, instructor, and faithful friend, after this? He seemed all truth; and he is all a lie: the world is all a lie: would I could leave it this moment!"

"This is all romantic nonsense," said General Rolleston, beginning to be angry. "You are a little fool, and in your ignorance and innocence have no idea how well this young fellow has behaved on the whole. I tell you what;—in spite of this one fault, I should like to shake him by the hand. I will too; and then admonish him afterwards."

"You shall not. You shall not," cried Helen, seizing him almost violently by the arm. "You take him by the hand! A monster! How dare you steal into my esteem? How dare you be a miracle of goodness, self-denial, learning, and every virtue that a lady might worship and thank God for, when all the time you are a vile, convicted!"

"I'll thank you not to say that word," said Hazel, firmly.

"I'll call you what you are, if I choose," said Helen, defiantly. But for all that she did not do it. She said piteously, "What offence had I ever given you? What crime had I ever committed, that you must make me the victim of this diabolical deceit? O, sir, what powers of mind you have wasted to achieve this victory over a poor unoffending girl! What was your motive? What good could come of it to you? He won't speak to me. He is not even penitent. Sullen and obstinate! He shall be taken to England, and well punished for it. Papa, it is your duty."

"Helen," said the General, "you ladies are rather too fond of hitting a man when he is down. And you speak daggers, as the saying is; and then wish you had bitten your tongue off sooner. You are my child, but you are also a British subject; and, if you charge me on my duty to take this man to England and have him imprisoned, I must. But, before you go that length, you had better hear the whole story."

"Sir," said Robert Penfold, quietly, "I will go back to prison this minute, if she wishes it."

"How dare you interrupt papa," said Helen, haughtily, but with a great sob.

"Come, come," said the General, "be quiet, both of you, and let me say my say. (To Robert.) You had better turn your head away, for I am a straightforward man, and I'm going to show her you are not a villain, but a madman. This Robert Penfold wrote me a letter, imploring me to find him some honest employment, however menial. That looked well, and I made him my gardener. He was a capital gardener; but one fine day he caught sight of you. You are a very lovely girl, though you don't seem to know it; and he is a madman; and he fell in love with you." Helen uttered an ejaculation of great surprise. The General resumed: "He can only have seen you at a distance, or you would recognize him; but (really it is laughable) he saw you somehow, though you did not see him, and—Well, his insanity hurt himself, and did not hurt

you. You remember how he suspected burglary, and watched night after night under your window. That was out of love for you. His insanity took the form of fidelity and humble devotion. He got a wound for his pains, poor fellow! and you must Arthur Wardlaw get him a clerk's place."

"Arthur Wardlaw!" cried Seaton. "Was he him I owed it?" and he groaned aloud.

Said Helen, "He hates poor Arthur, his benefactor." Then to Penfold: "If you are that James Seaton, you received a letter from me."

"I did," said Penfold; and putting his hand in his bosom he drew out a letter and showed it her.

"Let me see it," said Helen.

"O no! don't take this from me too," said he, piteously.

General Rolleston continued. "The day we sailed he disappeared; and I am afraid not without some wild idea of being in the same ship with me. This was very reprehensible. Do you hear, young man? But what is the consequence? You get shipwrecked together, and the young madman takes such care of you that I find you well and hearty, and calling him your guardian angel. And—another thing to his credit—he has set his wits to work to restore you to the world. These ducks, one of which brings me here? Of course it was he who contrived that, not you. Young man, you must learn to look things in the face; this young lady is not of your sphere, to begin; and, in the next place, she is engaged to Mr. Arthur Wardlaw; and I am come out in his steamboat to take her to him. And as for you, Helen, take my advice; think what most convicts are compared to this one. Shut your eyes entirely to his folly, as I shall; and let you and I think only of his good deeds, and so make him all the return we can. You and I will go on board the steamboat directly; and, when we are there, we can tell Moreland there is somebody else on the island. He then turned to Penfold, and said: "My daughter and I will keep in the after-part of the vessel, and anybody that likes can leave the ship at Valparaiso. Helen, I know it is wrong; but what can I do?—I am so happy. You are alive and well: how can I punish or afflict a human creature to-day? and, above all, how can I crush this unhappy young man, without whom I should never have seen you again in this world? My daughter! my dear lost child!" and he held her at arm's length and gazed at her, and then drew her to his bosom, and for him Robert Penfold ceased to exist, except as a man that had saved his daughter.

"Papa," said Helen, after a long pause, "just make him tell why he could not trust to me. Why he passed himself off to me for a clergyman."

"I am a clergyman," said Robert Penfold.

"O!" said Helen, shocked to find him so hardened, as she thought. She lifted her hands to heaven, and the tears streamed from her eyes. "Well, sir," said she, faintly, "I see I cannot reach your conscience. One question more, and then I have done with you forever. Why in all these months that we have been alone, and that you have shown me the nature, I don't say of an honest man, but of an angel,—yes, papa, of an angel,—why could you not show me one humble virtue, sincerity? It belongs to a man. Why could you not say, 'I have committed one crime in my life, but repented forever; judge by this confession, and by what you have seen of me, whether I shall ever commit another. Take me as I am, and esteem me as a penitent and more worthy man; but I will not deceive you and pass for a paragon. Why could you not say as much as

this to me? If you loved me, why deceive me so cruelly?"

These words, uttered no longer harshly, but in a mournful, faint, despairing voice, produced an effect the speaker little expected. Robert Penfold made two attempts to speak, but though he opened his mouth, and his lips quivered, he could get no word out. He began to choke with emotion; and though he shed no tears, the convulsion that goes with weeping in weaker natures overpowered him in a way that was almost terrible.

"Confound it!" said General Rolleston, "this is monstrous of you, Helen; it is barbarous. You are not like your poor mother."

She was pale and trembling, and the tears flowing; but she showed her native obstinacy. She said, hoarsely, "Papa, you are blind. He must answer me. He knows me must!"

"I must," said Robert Penfold, gasping still. Then he manned himself by a mighty effort, and repeated with dignity, "I will." There was a pause while the young man still struggled for composure and self-command.

"Was I not often on the point of telling you my sad story? Then is it fair to say that I should never have told it you? But, O Miss Rolleston, you don't know what agony it may be to an unfortunate man to tell the truth. There are accusations so terrible, so *defiling*, that, when a man has proved them false, they still stick to him and soil him. Such an accusation I labor under, and a judge and a jury have branded me. If they had called me a murderer, I would have told you; but that is such a dirty crime. I feared the prejudices of the world. I dreaded to see your face alter to me. Yes, I trembled, and hesitated, and asked myself whether a man is bound to repeat a foul slander against himself, even when thirteen shallow men have said it, and made the lie law."

"There," said General Rolleston, "I thought how it would be, Helen; you have tormented him into defending himself, tooth and nail; so now we shall have the old story; he is innocent; I never knew a convict that was n't, if he found a fool to listen to him. I decline to hear another word. You need n't excuse yourself for changing your name; I excuse it, and that is enough. But the boat is waiting, and we can't stay to hear you justify a felony."

"I AM NOT A FELON. I AM A MARTYR."

CHAPTER LII.

ROBERT PENFOLD drew himself up to his full height, and uttered these strange words with a sad majesty that was very imposing. But General Rolleston, steeled by experience of convicts, their plausibility, and their histrionic powers, was staggered only for a moment. He deigned no reply; but told Helen Captain Moreland was waiting for her, and she had better go on board at once.

She stood like a statue.

"No, papa, I'll not turn my back on him till I know whether he is a felon or a martyr."

"My poor child, has he caught you at once with a clever phrase? A judge and a jury have settled that."

"They settled it as you would settle it, by refusing to hear me."

"Have I refused to hear you?" said Helen.

"What do I care for steamboats and captains? If I stay here to all eternity, I'll know from your own lips and your own face whether you are a felon or a martyr. It is no phrase, papa. He is a felon or a martyr; and I am a most unfortunate girl, or else a base, disloyal one."

"Fiddle-dee," said General Rolleston, angrily. Then, looking at his watch: "I give you five minutes to humbug us in — if you can."

Robert Penfold sighed patiently. But from that moment he ignored General Rolleston, and looked to Helen only. And she fixed her eyes upon his face with a tenacity and an intensity of observation that surpassed anything he had ever seen in his life. It dazzled him; but it did not dismay him.

"Miss Rolleston," said he, "my history can be told in the time my prejudiced judge allows me. I am a clergyman, and a private tutor at Oxford. One of my pupils was — Arthur Wardlaw. I took an interest in him because my father, Michael Penfold, was in Wardlaw's employ. This Arthur Wardlaw had a talent for mimicry; he mimicked one of the college officers publicly and offensively, and was about to be expelled, and that would have ruined his immediate prospects; for his father is just, but stern. I fought hard for him, and, being myself popular with the authorities, I got him off. He was grateful, or seemed to be, and we became greater friends than ever. We confided in each other. He told me he was in debt in Oxford, and much alarmed lest it should reach his father's ears, and lose him the promised partnership. I told him I was desirous to buy a small living near Oxford, which was then vacant; but I had only saved £400, and the price was £1,000; I had no means of raising the balance. Then he said, 'Borrow £2,000 of my father; give me fourteen hundred of it, and take your own time to repay the £600. I shall be my father's partner in a month or two,' said he; 'you can pay us back by instalments.' I thought this very kind of him. I did not want the living for myself, but to give my dear father certain comforts and country air every week; he needed it: he was born in the country. Well, I came to London about this business; and a stranger called on me, and said he came from Mr. Arthur Wardlaw, who was not well enough to come himself. He produced a note of hand for £2,000, signed John Wardlaw, and made me indorse it, and told me where to get it cashed; he would come next day for Arthur Wardlaw's share of the money. Well, I suspected no ill; would you? I went and got the note discounted, and locked the money up. It was not my money: the greater part was Arthur Wardlaw's. That same evening a policeman called, and asked several questions, which of course I answered. He then got me out of the house on some pretence, and arrested me as a forger."

"Oh!" cried Helen.

"I forgot the clergyman; I was a gentleman, and a man, insulted, and I knocked the officer down directly. But his myrmidons overpowered me. I was tried at the Central Criminal Court on two charges. First, the Crown (as they call the attorney that draws the indictment) charged me with forging the note of hand; and then with not forging it, but passing it, well knowing that somebody else had forged it. Well, Undercliff, the Expert, swore positively that the forged note was not written by me; and the Crown, as they call it, was defeated on that charge; but being proved a liar in a court of justice did not abash my accuser; the second charge was pressed with equal confidence

The note, you are to understand, was forged: that admits of no doubt; and I passed it; the question was whether I passed it knowing it to be forged. How was that to be determined? And here it was that my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, destroyed me. Of course, as soon as I was put in prison, I wrote and sent to Arthur Wardlaw. Would you believe it? he would not come to me. He would not even write. Then, as the time drew near, I feared he was a traitor. I treated him like one. I told my solicitor to drag him into court as my witness, and make him tell the truth. The clerk went down accordingly, and found he kept his door always locked; but the clerk outwitted him, and served him with the subpoena in his bedroom, before he could crawl under the bed. But he baffled us at last; he never appeared in the witness-box; and, when my counsel asked the court to imprison him, his father swore he could not come: he was dying, and all out of sympathy with me. Fine sympathy! that closed the lips, and concealed the truth; one syllable of which would have saved his friend and benefactor from a calamity worse than death. Is the truth poison, that to tell it makes a sick man die? Is the truth hell, that a dying man refuses to speak it? How can a man die better than speaking the truth? How can he die worse than withholding it? I believe his sickness and his death were lies like himself. For want of one word from Arthur Wardlaw to explain that I had every reason to expect a note of hand from him, the jury condemned me. They were twelve honest but shallow men — invited to go inside another man's bosom and guess what was there. They guessed that I knew and understood a thing which to this hour I neither know nor understand, by God!"

He paused a moment, then resumed: —

"I believe they founded their conjecture on my knocking down the officer. There was a reason for you! Why, forgers and their confederates are reptiles, and have no fight in them. Experience proves this. But these twelve men did not go by experience; they guessed, like babies, and, after much hesitation, condemned me; but recommended me to mercy. Mercy! What mercy did I deserve? Either I was innocent, or hanging was too good for me. No; in their hearts they doubted my guilt; and their doubt took that timid form instead of acquitting me. I was amazed at the verdict, and asked leave to tell the judge why Arthur Wardlaw had defied the court, and absented himself as my witness. Had the judge listened for one minute, he would have seen I was innocent. But no. I was in England where the mouth of the accused is stopped, if he is fool enough to employ counsel. The judge stopped my mouth, as your father just now tried to stop it; and they branded me as a felon.

"Up to that moment my life was honorable and worthy. Since that moment I have never wronged a human creature. Men pass from virtue to vice, from vice to crime; this is the ladder a soul goes down; but you are invited to believe that I jumped from innocence into a filthy felony, and then jumped back again none the worse, and was a gardener that fought for his employer, and a lover that controlled his passion. It is a lie, — a lie that ought not to take in a child. But prejudice degrades a man below the level of a child. I'll say no more; my patience is exhausted by wrongs and insults. I am as honest a man as ever breathed; and the place where we stand is mine, for I made it. Leave it and me this moment. Go to England, and leave me where the

animals, more reasonable than you, have the sense to see my real character. I'll not sail in the same ship with any man, nor any woman either, who can look me in the face, and take me for a felon."

He swelled and towered with the just wrath of an honest man driven to bay; and his eye shot like lightning. He was sublime.

Helen cowered; but her spirited old father turned red, and said, haughtily, "We take you at your word, and leave you, you insolent vagabond! Follow me this instant, Helen!"

And he marched out of the cavern in a fury.

But, instead of following him, Helen stood stock still, and cowered, and cowered till she seemed sinking forward to the ground, and she got hold of Robert Penfold's hand, and kissed it, and moaned over it "Martyr! Martyr!" she whispered, and still kissed his hand, like a slave offering her master pity, and asking pardon.

"Martyr! Martyr! Every word is true — true as my love."

In this attitude, and with these words on her lips, they were surprised by General Rolleston, who came back, astonished at his daughter not following him. Judge of his amazement now.

"What does this mean?" he cried, turning pale with anger.

"It means that he has spoken the truth, and that I shall imitate him. He is my martyr, and my love. When others cast shame on you, then it is time for me to show my heart. James Seaton, I love you for your madness and your devotion to her whom you had only seen at a distance. Ah! that was love! John Hazel, I love you for all that has passed between us. What can any other man be to me! — or woman to you? But, most of all, I love you, Robert Penfold, — my hero and my martyr. When I am told to your face that you are a felon, then to your face I say you are my idol, my hero, and my martyr. Love! the word is too tame, too common. I worship you, I adore you! How beautiful you are when you are angry! How noble you are now you forgive me! for you do forgive me, Robert; you must, you shall. No; you will not send your Helen away from you for her one fault so soon repeated! Show me you forgive me; show me you love me still, almost as much as I love you. He is crying. O my darling, my darling, my darling!" And she was round his neck in a moment, with tears and tender kisses, the first she had ever given him.

Ask yourself whether they were returned.

A groan, or rather, we might say, a snort of fury, interrupted the most blissful moment either of these young creatures had ever known. It came from General Rolleston, now white with wrath and horror.

"You villain!" he cried.

Helen threw herself upon him, and put her hand before his mouth.

"Not a word more, or I shall forget I am your daughter. No one is to blame but I. I love him. I made him love me. He has been trying hard not to love me so much. But I am a woman; and could not deny myself the glory and the joy of being loved better than woman was ever loved before. And so I am; I am. Kill me, if you like; insult me, if you will: but not a word against him, or I give him my hand, and we live and die together on this island. O papa! he has often saved that life you value so; and I have saved his. He is all the world to me. Have pity on your child. Have pity on him who carries my heart in his bosom."

She flung herself on her knees, and strained him tight, and implored him, with head thrown back, and little clutching hands, and eloquent eyes.

Ah! it is hard to resist the voice and look and slinging of a man's own flesh and blood. Children are so strong — upon their knees: their dear faces, bright copies of our own, are just the height of our hearts then.

The old man was staggered, was almost melted. "Give me a moment to think," said he, in a broken voice. "This blow takes my breath away."

Helen rose, and laid her head upon her father's shoulder, and still pleaded for her love by her soft touch and her tears that now flowed freely.

He turned to Penford with all the dignity of age and station. "Mr. Penford," said he, with grave politeness, "after what my daughter has said, I must treat you as a man of honor, or I must insult her. Well, then, I expect you to show me you are what she thinks you, and are not what a court of justice has proclaimed you. Sir, this young lady is engaged with her own free will to a gentleman who is universally esteemed, and has never been accused to his face of any unworthy act. Relying on her plighted word, the Wardlaws have fitted out a steamer and searched the Pacific, and found her. Can you, as a man of honor, advise her to stay here and compromise her own honor in every way? Ought she to break faith with her betrothed on account of vague accusations made behind his back?"

"It was only in self-defence I accused Mr. Arthur Wardlaw," said Robert Penfold.

General Rolleston resumed:—

"You said just now there are accusations which soil a man. If you were in my place, would you let your daughter marry a man of honor, who had unfortunately been found guilty of a felony?"

Robert groaned and hesitated, but he said "No."

"Then what is to be done? She must either keep her plighted word, or else break it. For whom? For a gentleman she esteems and loves, but cannot marry. A leper may be a saint; but I would rather bury my child than marry her to a leper. A convict may be a saint; but I'll kill her with my own hand sooner than she shall marry a convict: and in your heart and conscience you cannot blame me. Were you a father, you would do the same. What then remains for her and me but to keep faith? and what can you do better than leave her, and carry away her everlasting esteem and her father's gratitude? It is no use being good by halves, or bad by halves. You must either be a selfish villain, and urge her to abandon all shame, and live here on this island with you forever, or you must be a brave and honest man, and bow to a parting that is inevitable. Consider, sir; your eloquence and her pity have betrayed this young lady into a confession that separates you. Her enforced residence here with you has been innocent. It would be innocent no longer, now she has been so mad as to own she loves you. And I tell you frankly, if, after that confession, you insist on going on board the steamer with her, I must take you; humanity requires it; but, if I do, I shall hand you over to the law as a convict escaped before his time. Perhaps I ought to do so as it is; but that is not certain; I don't know to what country this island belongs. I may have no right to capture you in strange dominions; but an English ship is England,—and if you set foot on the Springbok you are lost. Now, then,

you are a man of honor; you love my child truly, and not selfishly;—you have behaved nobly until to-day; go one step farther on the right road; call worldly honor and the God whose vows you have taken, sir, to your aid, and do your duty."

"O man, man!" cried Robert Penfold, "you ask more of me than flesh and blood can bear. What shall I say? What shall I do?"

Helen replied, calmly: "Take my hand, and let us die together, since we cannot live together with honor."

General Rolleston groaned. "For this, then, I have traversed one ocean, and searched another, and found my child. I am nothing to her—nothing. O, who would be a father!" He sat down oppressed with shame and grief, and bowed his stately head in manly but pathetic silence.

"O papa, papa!" cried Helen, "forgive your ungrateful child!" And she kneeled and sobbed, with her forehead on his knees.

Then Robert Penfold, in the midst of his own agony, found room in that great suffering heart of his for pity. He knelt down himself, and prayed for help in this bitter trial. He rose haggard with the struggle, but languid and resigned, like one whose death-warrant has been read.

"Sir," said he, "there is but one way. You must take her home; and I shall stay here."

"Leave you all alone on this island!" said Helen. "Never! If you stay here, I shall stay to comfort you."

"I decline that offer. I am beyond the reach of comfort."

"Think what you do, Robert," said Helen, with unnatural calmness. "If you have no pity on yourself, have pity on us. Would you rob me of the very life you have taken such pains to save? My poor father will carry nothing to England but my dead body. Long before we reach that country I loved so well, and now hate it for its stupidity and cruelty to you, my soul will have flown back to this island to watch over you, Robert. You bid me to abandon you to solitude and despair. Neither of you two love me half as much as I love you both."

General Rolleston sighed deeply. "If I thought that," said he,—"then, in a faint voice, "my own courage fails me now. I look into my heart, and I see that my child's life is dearer to me than all the world. She was dying, they say. Suppose I send Moreland to the Continent for a clergyman, and marry you. Then you can live on this island forever. Only you must let me live here too; for I could never show my face again in England after acting so dishonorably. It will be a miserable end of a life passed in honor; but I suppose it will not be for long. Shame can kill as quickly as disappointed love."

"Robert, Robert!" cried Helen in agony.

The martyr saw that he was master of the situation, and must be either base or very noble,—there was no middle way. He leaned his head on his hands, and thought with all his might.

"Hush!" said Helen: "he is wiser than we are. Let him speak."

"If I thought you would pine and die upon the voyage, no power should part us. But you are not such a coward. If my life depended on yours, would you not live?"

"You know I would."

"When I was wrecked on White-water Island, you played the man. Not one woman in a thousand

could have launched a boat, and sailed it with a boat-hook for a mast, and —"

Helen interrupted him. "It was nothing; I loved you. I love you better now."

"I believe it, and therefore I ask you to rise above your sex once more, and play the man for me. This time it is not my life you are to rescue, but that which is more precious still: my good name."

"Ah! that would be worth living for!" cried Helen.

"You will find it very hard to do; but not harder for a woman than to launch a boat, and sail her without a mast. See my father, Michael Penfold. See Undercliff, the expert. See the solicitor—the counsel. Sift the whole story; and, above all, find out why Arthur Wardlaw dared not enter the witness-box. Be obstinate as a man; be supple as a woman; and don't talk of dying when there is a friend to be rescued from dishonor by living and working."

"Die! while I can rescue you from death or dishonor! I will not be so base. Ah, Robert, Robert, how well you know me!"

"Yes, I do know you, Helen. I believe that great soul of yours will keep your body strong to do this brave work for him you love, and who loves you. And as for me, I am man enough to live for years upon this island, if you will only promise me two things."

"I promise then."

"Never to die, and never to marry Arthur Wardlaw, until you have reversed that lying sentence which has blasted me. Lay your hand on your father's head, and promise me that."

Helen laid her hand upon her father's head, and said, "I pledge my honor not to die, if life is possible, and never to marry any man, until I have reversed that lying sentence which has blasted the angel I love."

"And I pledge myself to help her," said General Rolleston, warmly, "for now I *know* you are a man of honor. I have too often been deceived by eloquence to listen much to that. But now you have proved by your actions what you are. You pass a forged check, knowing it to be forged! I'd stake my salvation it's a lie. There's my hand. God comfort you! God reward you, my noble fellow!"

"I hope he will, sir," sobbed Robert Penfold. "You are her father; and you take my hand; perhaps that will be sweet to think of by and by; but no joy can enter my heart now; it is broken. Take her away at once, sir. Flesh is weak. My powers of endurance are exhausted."

General Rolleston acted promptly on this advice. He rolled up her rugs, and the things she had made, and Robert had the courage to take them down to the boat. Then he came back, and the General took her bag to the boat.

All this time the girl herself sat wringing her hands in anguish, and not a tear. It was beyond that now.

As he passed Robert, the General said, "Take leave of her alone. I will come for her in five minutes. You see how sure I feel you are a man of honor."

When Robert went in, she rose and tottered to him, and fell on his neck. She saw it was the death-bed of their love, and she kissed his eyes, and clung to him. They moaned over each other, and clung to each other, in mute despair.

The General came back, and he and Robert took Helen, shivering and fainting, to the boat. As the boat put off, she awoke from her stupor, and put her hands to Robert with one piercing cry.

They were parted.

CHAPTER LIII.

IN that curious compound the human heart: respectable motive is sometimes connected with a criminal act. And it was so with Joseph Wylie: he had formed an attachment to Nancy Rouse, and her price was two thousand pounds.

This Nancy Rouse was a character. She was General Rolleston's servant for many years; her place was the kitchen: but she was a woman of such restless activity, and so wanting in the proper pride of a servant, that she would help a housemaid, or a lady's maid, or do anything almost, except be idle! to use her own words, she was one as could not abide to sit mumchance. That fatal foe to domestic industry, the London Journal, fluttered in vain down her area, for she could not read. She supported a sick mother out of her wages, aided by a few presents of money and clothes from Helen Rolleston, who had a great regard for Nancy, and knew what a hard fight she had to keep a sick woman out of her twenty pounds a year.

In love, Nancy was unfortunate; her business looks and sterling virtues were balanced by a provoking sagacity, and an irritating habit of speaking her mind. She humbled her lovers' vanity, one after another, and they fled. Her heart smarted more than once.

Nancy was ambitious; and her first rise in life took place as follows: When the Rollestons went to Australia, she had a good cry at parting with Helen; but there was no help for it: she could not leave her mother. However, she told Helen she could not stomach any other service, and, since she must be parted, was resolved to better herself. This phrase is sometimes drolly applied by servants, because they throw Independence into the scale. In Nancy's case it meant setting up as a washerwoman. Helen opened her hazel eyes with astonishment at this, the first round in the ladder of Nancy's ambition; however, she gave her ten pounds, and thirty introductions, twenty-five of which missed fire, and with the odd five Nancy set up her tub in the suburbs, and by her industry, geniality, and frugality, got on tolerably well. In due course she rented a small house backed by a small green, and advertised for a gentleman lodger. She soon got one; and soon got rid of him. However, she was never long without one.

Nancy met Joseph Wylie in company: and, as sailors are brisk wooers, he soon became her acknowledged suitor, and made some inroad into her heart, though she kept on the defensive, warned by past experience.

Wylie's love-making had a droll feature about it; it was most of it carried on in the presence of three washerwomen, because Nancy had no time to spare from her work, and Wylie had no time to lose in his wooing, being on shore for a limited period. And this absence of superfluous delicacy on his part gave him an unfair advantage over the tallow-chandler's foreman, his only rival at present. Many a sly thrust, and many a hearty laugh, from his female auditors, greeted his amorous eloquence: but for all that, they sided with him, and Nancy felt her

importance, and brightened along with her mates at the sailor's approach, which was generally announced by a cheerful hail. He was good company, to use Nancy's own phrase, and she accepted him as a sweetheart on probation. But, when Mr. Wylie urged her to marry him, she demurred, and gave a string of reasons, all of which the sailor and his allies, the subordinate washerwomen, combated in full conclave.

Then she spoke out, "My lad, the wash-tub is a saddle as won't carry double. I've seen poverty enough in my mother's house, it sha'n't come in at my door to drive love out o' window. Two comes together with just enough for two; next year instead of two they are three, and one of the three can't work and wants a servant extra, and by and by there is half a dozen, and the money coming in at the spigot and going out at the bung-hole."

One day, in the middle of his wooing, she laid down her iron, and said, "You come along with me. And I wonder how much work will be done whilst my back is turned, for you three gabbling and wondering whatever I'm agoing to do with this here sailor."

She took Wylie a few yards down the street, and showed him a large house with most of the windows broken. "There," said she, "there's a sight for a seafaring man. That's in Chancery."

"Well, it's better to be there than in H—," said Wylie, meaning to be sharper.

"Wait till you've tried 'em both," said Nancy.

Then she took him to the back of the house, and showed him a large garden attached to it.

"Now, Joseph," said she, "I've showed you a lodging-house and a drying-ground; and I'm a cook and a clear-starcher, and I'm wild to keep lodgers and do for 'em, washing and all. Then, if their foul linen goes out, they follows it: the same if they has their meat from the cook-shop. Four hundred pounds a year lies there a waiting for me. I've been at them often to let me them premises: but they says no, we have got no order from the court to let. Which the court would rather see 'em go to rack an' ruin for nothing, than let 'em to an honest woman as would pay the rent punctual, and make her penny out of 'em, and nobody none the worse. And to sell them, the price is two thousand pounds, and if I had it I'd give it this minit: but where are the likes of you and me to get two thousand pounds? But the lawyer he says, 'Miss Rouse, from you one thousand down, and the rest on mortgage at £45 the year,' which it is dirt cheap, I say. So now, my man, when that house is mine, I'm yours. I'm putting by for it o' my side. If you means all you say, why not save a bit o' yours. Once I get that house and garden, you need n't go to sea no more: nor you sha'n't. If I am to be bothered with a man, let me know where to put my finger on him at all hours, and not lie shivering and shaking at every window as creaks, and him out at sea. And if you are too proud to drive the linen in a light cart, why I could pay a man." In short she told him plainly she would not marry till she was above the world; and the road to above the world was through that great battered house and seedy garden, in Chancery.

Now it may appear a strange coincidence that Nancy's price to Wylie was two thousand pounds, and Wylie's to Wardlaw was two thousand pounds: but the fact is it was a forced coincidence. Wylie, bargaining with Wardlaw, stood out for two thousand pounds, because that was the price of the house and garden and Nancy.

Now, when Wylie returned to England safe after his crime and his perils, he comforted himself with the reflection that Nancy would have her house and garden, and he should have Nancy.

But young Wardlaw lay on his sick-bed; his father was about to return to the office, and the gold disguised as copper was ordered up to the cellars in Fenchurch Street. There, in all probability, the contents would be examined ere long, the fraud exposed, and other unpleasant consequences might follow over and above the loss of the promised £2,000.

Wylie felt very disconsolate, and went down, to Nancy Rouse depressed in spirits. To his surprise she received him with more affection than ever, and, reading his face in a moment, told him not to fret.

"It will be so in your way of life," said this homely comforter; "your sort comes home empty-handed one day, and money in both pockets the next. I'm glad to see you home at all, for I've been in care about you. You're very welcome, Joe. If you are come home honest and sober, why, that is the next best thing to coming home rich."

Wylie hung his head and pondered these words; and well he might, for he had not come home either so sober or so honest as he went out, but quite as poor.

However, his elastic spirits soon revived in Nancy's sunshine, and he became more in love with her than ever.

But when, presuming upon her affection, he urged her to marry him and trust to Providence, she laughed in his face.

"Trust to himprovidence, you mean," said she; "no, no, Joseph. If you are unlucky, I must be lucky, before you and me can come together."

Then Wylie resolved to have his £2,000 at all risks. He had one great advantage over a landman who has committed a crime. He could always go to sea and find employment, first in one ship, and then in another. Terra firma was not one of the necessaries of life to him.

He came to Wardlaw's office to feel his way, and talked guardedly to Michael Penfold about the loss of the Proserpine. His apparent object was to give information; his real object was to gather it. He learned that old Wardlaw was very much occupied with fitting out a steamer; that the forty chests of copper had actually come up from the Shannon and were under their feet at that moment, and that young Wardlaw was desperately ill and never came to the office. Michael had not at that time learned the true cause of young Wardlaw's illness. Yet Wylie detected that young Wardlaw's continued absence from the office gave Michael singular uneasiness. The old man fidgeted, and washed the air with his hands, and with simple cunning urged Wylie to go and see him about the Proserpine, and get him to the office, if it was only for an hour or two. "Tell him we are all at sixes and sevens, Mr. Wylie; all at sixes and sevens."

"Well," said Wylie, affecting a desire to oblige, "give me a line to him; for I've been twice, and could never get in."

Michael wrote an earnest line to say that Wardlaw senior had been hitherto much occupied in fitting out the Springbok, but that he was going into the books next week. What was to be done?

The note was received; but Arthur declined to see the bearer. Then Wylie told the servant it was Joseph Wylie, on a matter of life and death. "Tell

him I must stand at the stair-foot and hallo it out, if he won't hear it any other way."

This threat obtained his admission to Arthur Wardlaw. The sailor found him on a sofa, in a darkened room, pale and worn to a shadow.

"Mr. Wardlaw," said Wylie, firmly, "you must not think I don't feel for you; but, sir, we are gone too far to stop, you and me. There is two sides to this business; it is £150,000 for you, and £2,000 for me, or it is — " "What do I care for money now?" groaned Wardlaw. "Let it all go to the devil, who tempted me to destroy her I loved better than money, better than all the world." "Well, but hear me out," said Wylie. "I say it is £150,000 to you and £2,000 to me, or else it is twenty years' penal servitude to both on us."

"Penal servitude!" And the words roused the merchant from his lethargy like a shower-bath.

"You know that well enough," said Wylie. "Why, 't was a hanging matter a few years ago. Come, come, there are no two ways; you must be a man, or we are undone."

Fear prevailed in that timorous breast, which even love of money had failed to rouse. Wardlaw sat up, staring wildly, and asked Wylie what he was to do.

"First, let me ring for a bottle of that old brandy of yours."

The brandy was got. Wylie induced him to drink a wineglassful neat, and then to sit at the table and examine the sailors' declaration and the logs. "I'm no great scholar," said he. "I warn't a going to lay these before the underwriters till you had overhauled them. There, take another drop now, — 't will do you good, — while I draw up this thundering blind."

Thus encouraged and urged, the broken-hearted schemer languidly compared the seamen's declaration with the logs; and, even in his feeble state of mind and body, made an awkward discovery at once.

"Why, they don't correspond!" said he.

"What don't correspond?"

"Your men's statement and the ship's log. The men speak of one heavy gale after another, in January, and the pumps going; but the log says, 'A puff of wind from the N. E.' And here, again, the entry exposes your exaggeration; one branch of our evidence contradicts the other; this comes of trying to prove too much. You must say the log was lost, went down with the ship."

"How can I?" cried Wylie. "I have told too many I had got it safe at home."

"Why did you say that? What madness!"

"Why were you away from your office at such a time? How can I know everything and do everything? I counted on you for the headwork ashore. Can't ye think of any way to square the log to that part of our tale? might paste in a leaf or two, eh?"

"That would be discovered at once. You have committed an irremediable error. What broad strokes this Hudson makes. He must have written with the stump of a quill."

Wylie received this last observation with a look of contempt for the mind that could put so trivial a question in so great an emergency.

"Are you quite sure poor Hudson is dead?" asked Wardlaw, in a low voice.

"Dead! Don't I tell you I saw him die!" said Wylie, trembling all of a sudden.

He took a glass of brandy, and sent it flying down his throat.

"Leave the paper with me," said Arthur, languidly, "and tell Penfold I'll crawl to the office to-morrow. You can meet me there; I shall see nobody else."

Wylie called next day at the office, and was received by Penfold, who had now learned the cause of Arthur's grief, and ushered the visitor in to him with looks of benevolent concern. Arthur was seated like a lunatic, pale and motionless; on the table before him was a roast fowl and a salad, which he had forgotten to eat. His mind appeared to alternate between love and fraud; for, as soon as he saw Wylie he gave himself a sort of shake, and handed Wylie the log and the papers.

"Examine them; they agree better with each other now."

Wylie examined the log, and started with surprise and superstitious terror. "Why, Hiram's ghost has been here at work!" said he. "It is in very handwriting."

"Hush!" said Wardlaw; "not so loud. Will it do?"

"The writing will do first-rate; but any one can see this log has never been to sea."

Inspired by the other's ingenuity, he then, after a moment's reflection, emptied the salt-cellar into a plate, and poured a little water over it. He wetted the leaves of the log with this salt water, and dog-eared the whole book.

Wardlaw sighed. "See what expedients we are driven to," said he. He then took a little soot from the chimney, and mixed it with salad oil. He applied some of this mixture to the parchment cover, rubbed it off, and by such manipulation gave it a certain mellow look, as if it had been used by working hands.

Wylie was armed with these materials, and furnished with money, to keep his sailors to their tale, in case of their being examined.

Arthur begged, in his present affliction, to be excused from going personally into the matter of the Proserpine; and said that Penfold had the ship's log, and the declaration of the survivors, which the insurers could inspect, previously to their being deposited at Lloyd's.

The whole thing wore an excellent face, and nobody found a peg to hang suspicion on so far.

After this preliminary, and the deposit of the papers, nothing was hurried; the merchant, absorbed in his grief, seemed to be forgetting to ask for his money. Wylie remonstrated; but Arthur convinced him they were still on too ticklish ground to show any hurry without exciting suspicion.

And so passed two weary months, during which Wylie fell out of Nancy Rouse's good graces, for idling about doing nothing.

"Be you a waiting for the plum to fall into your mouth, young man?" said she.

The demand was made on the underwriters, and Arthur contrived that it should come from his father. The firm was of excellent repute, and had paid hundreds of insurances, without a loss to the underwriters. The Proserpine had foundered at sea; several lives had been lost, and of the survivors, one had since died, owing to the hardships he had endured. All this betokened a genuine calamity. Nevertheless, one ray of suspicion rested on the case, at first. The captain of the Proserpine had lost a great many ships; and, on the first announcement, one or two were resolved to sift the matter on that ground alone. But when five eyewitnesses, suppressing all mention of the word

"drink," declared that Captain Hudson had refused to leave the vessel, and described his going down with the ship, from an obstinate and too exalted sense of duty, every chink was closed; and, to cut the matter short, the insurance money was paid to the last shilling, and Benson, one of the small underwriters, ruined. Nancy Rouse, who worked for Mrs. Benson, lost eighteen shillings and sixpence, and was dreadfully put out about it.

Wylie heard her lamentations, and grinned; for now his £2,000 was as good as in his pocket, he thought. Great was his consternation when Arthur told him that every shilling of the money was forestalled, and that the entire profit of the transaction was yet to come, viz. by the sale of the gold dust.

"Then, sell it," said Wylie.

"I dare not. The affair must cool down before I can appear as a seller of gold; and even then I must dribble it out with great caution. Thank Heaven, it is no longer in those cellars."

"Where is it, then?"

"That is my secret. You will get your two thousand all in good time; and, if it makes you one tenth part as wretched as it has made me, you will thank me for all these delays."

At last Wylie lost all patience, and began to show his teeth; and then Arthur Wardlaw paid him his two thousand pounds in forty crisp notes.

He crammed them into a side pocket, and went down triumphant to Nancy Rouse. Through her parlor window he saw the benign countenance of Michael Penfold. He then remembered that Penfold had told him some time before that he was going to lodge with her, as soon as the present lodger should go.

This, however, rather interrupted Wylie's design of walking in and chucking the two thousand pounds into Nancy's lap. On the contrary, he showed them deeper down in his pocket, and resolved to see the old gentleman to bed, and then produce his pelf, and fix the wedding-day with Nancy.

He came in, and found her crying, and Penfold making weak efforts to console her. The tea-things were on the table, and Nancy's cup half emptied.

Wylie came in, and said, "Why, what is the matter now?"

He said this mighty cheerfully, as one who carried the panacea for all ills in his pocket, and a medicine peculiarly suited to Nancy Rouse's constitution. But he had not quite fathomed her yet.

As soon as ever she saw him she wiped her eyes, and asked him, grimly, what he wanted there. Wylie stared at the reception; but replied stoutly, that it was pretty well known by this time what he wanted in that quarter.

"Well, then," said Nancy, "Want will be your master. Why did you never tell me Miss Helen was in that ship? my sweet, dear mistress as was, that I feel for like a mother. You left her to drown, and saved your own great useless carcass, and drowned she is, poor dear. Get out o' my sight, do."

"It was n't my fault, Nancy," said Wylie, earnestly. "I did n't know who she was, and I advised her to come with us; but she would go with that parson chap."

"What parson chap? What a liar you be! She is Wardlaw's sweetheart, and don't care for no parsons. If you did n't know you was to blame, why did n't you tell me a word of your own accord?"

You kep' dark. Do you call yourself a man, to leave my poor young lady to shift for herself? —"

"She had as good a chance to live as I had," said Wylie, sullenly.

"No, she had n't; you took care o' yourself. Well, since you are so fond of yourself, keep yourself to yourself, and don't come here no more. After this, I hate the sight on ye. You are like the black dog in my eyes, and always will be. Poor, dear Miss Helen! Ah, I cried when she left, — my mind misgave me; but little I thought she would perish in the salt seas, and all for want of a man in the ship. If you had gone out again after in the steamboat, — Mr. Penfold have told me all about it, — I'd believe you were n't so much to blame.

But no; lloping and looking about all day for months. There's my door, Joe Wylie; I can't cry comfortable before you, as had a hand in drowning of her. You and me is parted forever. I'll die as I am, or I'll marry a man; which you ain't one, nor nothing like one. Is he waiting for you to hold the door open, Mr. Penfold? or don't I speak plain enough? Them as I gave the sack to afore you did n't want so much telling."

"Well, I'm going," said Wylie, sullenly; then, with considerable feeling, "This is hard lines."

But Nancy was inexorable, and turned him out, with the £2,000 in his pocket.

He took the notes out of his pocket, and flung them furiously down in the dirt.

Then he did what everybody does under similar circumstances, — he picked them up again, and pocketed them, along with the other dirt they had gathered.

Next day he went down to the docks, and looked out for a ship; he soon got one, and signed as second mate. She was to sail in a fortnight.

But, before a week was out, the bank-notes had told so upon him, that he was no longer game to go to sea. But the captain he had signed with was a Tartar, and not to be trifled with. He consulted a knowing friend, and that friend advised him to disguise himself till the ship had sailed. Accordingly he rigged himself out with a long coat, and a beard, and spectacles, and hid his sea-slouch as well as he could, and changed his lodgings. Finding he succeeded so well, he thought he might as well have the pleasure of looking at Nancy Rouse, if he could not talk to her. So he actually had the hardihood to take the parlor next door; and by this means he heard her move about in her room, and caught a sight of her at work on her little green; and he was shrewd enough to observe she did not sing and whistle as she used to do. The dog chuckled at that.

His bank-notes worried him night and day. He was afraid to put them in a bank; afraid to take them about with him into his haunts; afraid to leave them at home; and out of this his perplexity arose some incidents worth relating in their proper order.

Arthur Wardlaw returned to business; but he was a changed man. All zest in the thing was gone. His fraud set him above the world; and that was now enough for him, in whom ambition was dead, and, indeed, nothing left alive in him but deep regrets.

He drew in the horns of speculation, and went on in the old safe routine; and to the restless activity that had jeopardized the firm succeeded a strange torpidity. He wore black for Helen, and sorrowed without hope. He felt he had offended

Heaven, and had met his punishment in Helen's death. Wardlaw senior retired to Elm Trees, and seldom saw his son. When they did meet, the old man sometimes whispered hope, but the whisper was faint, and unheeded.

One day Wardlaw senior came up express, to communicate to Arthur a letter from General Rolleston, written at Valparaiso. In this letter, General Rolleston deplored his unsuccessful search: but said he was going westward, upon the report of a Dutch whaler, who had seen an island reflected in the sky, while sailing between Juan Fernandez and Norfolk Isle.

Arthur only shook his head with a ghastly smile. "She is in heaven," said he, "and I shall never see her again, not here or hereafter."

Wardlaw senior was shocked at this speech; but he made no reply. He pitied his son too much to criticise the expressions into which his bitter grief betrayed him. He was old, and had seen the triumphs of time over all things human, sorrow included. These, however, as yet, had done nothing for Arthur Wardlaw. At the end of six months, his grief was as sombre and as deadly as the first week.

But one day, as this pale figure in deep mourning sat at his table, going listlessly and mechanically through the business of scraping money together for others to enjoy, whose hearts, unlike his, might not be in the grave, his father burst in upon him, with a telegram in his hand, and waved it over his head in triumph. "She is found! she is found!" he roared: "read that!" and thrust the telegram into his hands.

Those hands trembled, and the languid voice rose into shrieks of astonishment and delight, as Arthur read the words, "We have got her, alive and well: shall be at Charing Cross Hotel, 8 P.M."

CHAPTER LIV.

WHILE the boat was going to the Springbok, General Rolleston whispered to Captain Moreland; and what he said may be almost guessed from what occurred on board the steamer soon afterwards. Helen was carried trembling to the cabin, and the order was given to heave the anchor and get under way. A groan of disappointment ran through the ship; Captain Moreland expressed the General's regret to the men, and divided £200 upon the captain; and the groan ended in a cheer.

As for Helen's condition, that was at first mistaken for ill health. She buried herself for two whole days in her cabin; and from that place faint moans were heard now and then. The sailors called her the sick lady.

Heaven knows what she went through in that forty-eight hours.

She came upon deck at last in a strange state of mind and body: restless, strung up, absorbed. The rare vigor she had acquired on the island came out now with a vengeance. She walked the deck with briskness, and a pertinacity that awakened admiration in the crew at first, but by and by with superstitious awe. For, while the untiring feet went briskly to and fro over leagues and leagues of plank every day, the great hazel eyes were turned inwards, and the mind, absorbed with one idea, skimmed the men and things about her listlessly.

She had a mission to fulfil, and her whole nature was stringing itself up to do the work.

She walked so many miles a day, partly from excitement, partly with a deliberate resolve to cherish her health and strength; "I may want them both," said she, "to clear Robert Penfold." Thought and high purpose shone through her so, that for a while nobody dared trouble her much with commonplaces. To her father, she was always sweet and filial, but sadly cold compared with what she had always been hitherto. He was taking her boy to England, but her heart stayed behind upon the island: he saw this, and said it.

"Forgive me," said she, coldly; and that was her reply.

Sometimes she had violent passions of weeping; and then he would endeavor to console her; but in vain. They ran their course, and were succeeded by the bodily activity and concentration of purpose they had interrupted for a little while.

At last, after a rapid voyage, they drew near the English coast; and then General Rolleston, who had hitherto spared her feelings, and been most indulgent and considerate, felt it was high time to come to an understanding with her as to the course they should both pursue.

"Now, Helen," said he, "about the Wardlaws!"

Helen gave a slight shudder. But she said, after a slight hesitation, "Let me know your wishes."

"O, mine are, not to be too ungrateful to the father, and not to deceive the son."

"I will not be ungrateful to the father, nor deceive the son," said Helen, firmly.

The General kissed her on the brow, and called her his brave girl. "But," said he, "on the other hand, it must not be published that you have been for eight months on an island alone with a convict. Anything sooner than that. You know the malice of your own sex; if one woman gets hold of that, you will be an outcast from society."

Helen blushed and trembled. "Nobody need be told that but Arthur; and I am sure he loves me well enough not to injure me with the world."

"But he would be justified in declining your hand, after such a revelation."

"Quite. And I hope he will decline it when he knows I love another, however hopelessly."

"You are going to tell Arthur Wardlaw all that?"

"I am."

"Then all I can say is, you are not like other women."

"I have been brought up by a man."

"If I was Arthur Wardlaw, it would be the last word you should ever speak to me."

"If you were Arthur Wardlaw, I should be on that dear island now."

"Well, suppose his love should be greater than his spirit, and —"

"If he does not go back when he hears of my hopeless love, I don't see how I can. I shall marry him: and try with all my soul to love him. I'll open every door in London to Robert Penfold; except one; my husband's. And that door, while I live, he shall never enter. O my heart; my heart!" She burst out sobbing desperately: and her father laid her head upon his bosom, and sighed deeply, and asked himself how all this would end.

Before they landed, her fortitude seemed to return; and of her own accord she begged her father to telegraph to the Wardlaws.

"Would you not like a day to compose yourself and prepare for this trying interview?" said he.

"I should: but it is mere weakness. And I must cure myself of weakness, or I shall never clear Robert Penfold. And then, papa, I think of you. If old Mr. Wardlaw heard you had been a day in town, you might suffer in his good opinion. We shall be in London at seven. Ask them at eight. That will be one hour's respite. God help me, and strengthen poor Arthur to bear the blow I bring him!"

Long before eight o'clock that day, Arthur Wardlaw had passed from a state of sombre misery and remorse to one of joy, exultation, and unmixed happiness. He no longer regretted his crime, nor the loss of the Proserpine: Helen was alive and well, and attributed not her danger, but only her preservation, to the Wardlaws.

Wardlaw senior kept his carriage in town, and precisely at eight o'clock they drove up to the door of the hotel.

They followed the servant with bounding hearts, and rushed into the room where the General and Helen stood ready to receive them. Old Wardlaw went to the General with both hands out, and so the General met him, and between these two it was almost an embrace. Arthur ran to Helen with cries of joy and admiration, and kissed her hands again and again, and shed such genuine tears of joy over them that she trembled all over, and was obliged to sit down. He kneeled at her feet, and still imprisoned one hand, and mumbled it, while she turned her head away and held her other hand before her face to hide its real expression, which was a mixture of pity and repugnance. But as her face was hidden, and her eloquent body quivered, and her hand was not withdrawn, it seemed a sweet picture of feminine affection to those who had not the key.

At last she was relieved from a most embarrassing situation by old Wardlaw; he cried out on this monopoly, and Helen instantly darted out of her chair, and went to him, and put up her cheek to him, which he kissed; and then she thanked him warmly for his courage in not despairing of her life, and his goodness in sending out a ship for her.

Now, the fact is, she could not feel grateful; but she knew she ought to be grateful, and she was ashamed to show no feeling at all in return for so much; so she was eloquent, and the old gentleman was naturally very much pleased at first; but he caught an expression of pain on Arthur's face, and then he stopped her. "My dear," said he, "you ought to thank Arthur, not me; it is his love for you which was the cause of my zeal. If you owe me anything, pay it to him, for he deserves it best. He nearly died for you, my sweet girl. No, no, you must not hang your head for that, neither. What a fool I am to revive old sorrows! Here we are, the happiest four in England." Then he whispered to her, "Be kind to poor Arthur, that is all I ask. His very life depends on you."

Helen obeyed this order, and went slowly back to Arthur; she sat, cold as ice, on the sofa beside him, and he made love to her. She scarcely heard what he said; she was asking herself how she could end this intolerable interview, and escape her father's looks, who knew the real state of her heart.

At last she rose, and went and whispered to him: "My courage has failed me. Have pity on me, and get me away. It is the old man; he kills me."

General Rolleston took the hint, and acted with more tact than one would have given him credit for. He got up and rang the bell for tea; then he said to Helen, "You don't drink tea now, and I see

you are excited more than is good for you. You had better go to bed."

"Yes, papa," said Helen.

She took her candle, and as she passed young Wardlaw, she told him, in a low voice, she would be glad to speak to him alone to-morrow.

"At what hour?" said he, eagerly.

"When you like. At one."

And so she retired, leaving him in ecstasies. This was the first downright assignation she had ever made with him.

They met at one o'clock; he radiant as the sun, and a rose in his button-hole; she sad and sombre, and with her very skin twitching at the thought of the explanation she had to go through.

He began with amorous commonplaces; she stopped him, gravely. "Arthur," said she, "you and I are alone now, and I have a confession to make. Unfortunately, I must cause you pain—terrible pain. O! my heart flinches at the wound I am going to give you; but it is my fate either to wound you or to deceive you."

During this preamble, Arthur sat amazed, rather than alarmed. He did not interrupt her, though she paused, and would gladly have been interrupted, since an interruption is an assistance in perplexities.

"Arthur, we suffered great hardships on the boat, and you would have lost me but for one person. He saved my life again and again; I saved his upon the island. My constancy was subject to trials—O, such trials! So great an example of every manly virtue forever before my eyes! My gratitude and my pity eternally pleading England and you seemed gone forever. Make excuses for me if you can. Arthur—I—I have formed an attachment."

In making this strange avowal she hung her head and blushed, and the tears ran down her cheeks. But we suspect they ran for him, and not for Arthur.

Arthur turned deadly sick at this tremendous blow, dealt with so soft a hand. At last he gasped out, "If you marry him, you will bury me."

"No, Arthur," said Helen, gently; "I could not marry him, even if you were to permit me. When you know more, you will see that, of us three unhappy ones, you are the least unhappy. But, since this is so, am I wrong to tell you the truth, and leave you to decide whether our engagement ought to continue? Of course, what I have owned to you releases you."

"Releases me! but it does not unbind my heart from yours," cried Arthur, in despair.

Then his hysterical nature came out, and he was so near fainting away that Helen sprinkled water on his temples, and applied eau-de-cologne to his nostrils, and murmured, "Poor, poor Arthur! O, was I born only to afflict those I esteem?"

He saw her with the tears of pity in her eyes, and he caught her hand, and said, "You were always the soul of honor; keep faith with me, and I will cure you of that unhappy attachment."

"What! Do you hold me to my engagement after what I have told you?"

"Cruel Helen! you know I have not the power to hold you."

"I am not cruel; and you have the power. But, O, think! For your own sake, not mine."

"I have thought; and this attachment to a man you cannot marry is a mere misfortune,—yours as

well as mine. Give me your esteem until your love comes back, and let our engagement continue."

"It was for you to decide," said Helen, coldly, "and you have decided. There is one condition I must ask you to submit to."

"I submit to it."

"What, before you hear it?"

"Helen, you don't know what a year of misery I have endured, ever since the report came of your death. My happiness is cruelly dashed now, but still it is great happiness by comparison. Make your conditions. You are my queen, as well as my love and my life."

Helen hesitated. It shocked her delicacy to lower the man she had consented to marry.

"O Helen," said Arthur, "anything but secrets between you and me. Go on as you have begun, and let me know the worst at once."

"Can you be very generous, Arthur? — generous to him who has caused you so much pain?"

"I'll try," said Arthur, with a groan.

"I would not marry him, unless you gave me up: for I am your betrothed, and you are true to me. I could not marry him, even if I were not pledged to you; but it so happens, I can do him one great service without injustice to you; and this service I have vowed to do before I marry. I shall keep that vow, as I keep faith with you. He has been driven from society by a foul slander; that slander I am to sift and confute. It will be long and difficult; but I shall do it; and you could help me if you chose. But that I will not be so cruel as to ask."

Arthur bit his lip with jealous rage; but he was naturally cunning, and his cunning showed him there was at present but one road to Helen's heart. He quelled his torture as well as he could, and resolved to take that road. He reflected a moment, and then he said, —

"If you succeed in that, will you marry me next day?"

"I will, upon my honor."

"Then I will help you."

"Arthur, think what you say. Women have loved as unselfishly as this; but no man, that ever I heard of."

"No man ever did love a woman as I love you. Yes, I would rather help you, though with a sore heart, than hold aloof from you. What have we to do together?"

"Did I not tell you? — to clear his character of a foul stigma, and restore him to England, and to the world which he is so fitted to adorn."

"Yes, yes," said Arthur; "but who is it? Why do I ask, though? He must be a stranger to me."

"No stranger at all," said Helen; "but one who is almost as unjust to you as the world has been to him"; then, fixing her eyes full on him, she said, "Arthur, it is your old friend and tutor, Robert Penfold."

CHAPTER LV.

ARTHUR WARDLAW was thunderstruck; and, for some time, sat stupidly staring at her. And to this blank gaze succeeded a look of abject terror, which seemed to her strange, and beyond the occasion. But this was not all; for, after glaring at her with scared eyes and ashy cheeks a moment or two, he got up and literally staggered out of the room without a word.

He had been taken by surprise, and, for once, all his arts had failed him.

Helen, whose eyes had never left his face, as had followed his retiring figure, was frightened at the weight of the blow she had struck; and strange thoughts and conjectures filled her mind. Hitherto she had felt sure Robert Penfold was under a delusion as to Arthur Wardlaw, and that his suspicions were as unjust as they certainly were vague. In now, at the name of Robert Penfold, Arthur turned pale, and fled like a guilty thing. This was a coincidence that confirmed her good opinion of Robert Penfold, and gave her ugly thoughts of Arthur. Still, she was one very slow to condemn a friend, and too generous and candid to condemn on suspicion; so she resolved as far as possible to suspend her unfavorable judgment of Arthur, until she should have asked him why this great emotion, and heard his reply.

Moreover, she was no female detective, but a pure creature bent on clearing innocence. The object of her life was, not to discover the faults of Arthur Wardlaw, or any other person, but to clear Robert Penfold of a crime. Yet Arthur's strange behavior was a great shock to her; for here, at the very outset, he had somehow made her feel she must look for no assistance from him. She sighed at this check, and asked herself to whom she should apply first for aid. Robert had told her to see his counsel, his solicitor, his father, and Mr. Undercliff, an expert, and to sift the whole matter.

Not knowing exactly where to begin, she thought she would, after all, wait a day or two to give Arthur time to recover himself, and decide calmly whether he would co-operate with her or not.

In this trying interval, she set up a diary, — for the first time in her life; for she was no egotist; — and she noted down what we have just related, only in a very condensed form, and wrote at the margin: *Mysterious.*

Arthur never came near her for two whole days. This looked grave. On the third day she said to General Rolleston: —

"Papa, you will help me in the good cause, — will you not?"

He replied that he would do what he could, but feared that would be little.

"Will you take me down to Elm-trees, this morning?"

"With all my heart."

He took her down to Elm-trees. On the way she said: "Papa, you must let me get a word with Mr. Wardlaw alone."

"O, certainly. But, of course, you will not say a word to hurt his feelings."

"O papa!"

"Excuse me: but, when a person of your age is absorbed with one idea, she sometimes forgets that other people have any feelings at all."

Helen kissed him meekly, and said that was too true; and she would be upon her guard.

To General Rolleston's surprise, his daughter no sooner saw old Wardlaw than she went — or seemed to go — into high spirits, and was infinitely agreeable.

But at last, she got him all to herself, and then she turned suddenly grave, and said: —

"Mr. Wardlaw, I want to ask you a question. It is something about Robert Penfold."

Wardlaw shook his head. "That is a painful subject, my dear. But what do you wish to know about that unhappy young man?"

"Can you tell me the name of the counsel who defended him at the trial?"

Arthur Wardlaw's Letter.

Dearest Helen

I hear from
Mr Adams that you desire
to know the name of the
Counsel who defended
Robert Penfold.

It was Mr Tollemache,
he has Chambers in Lincoln's
Inn.

Ever devotedly yours,

Arthur Wardlaw

"No, indeed, I cannot."

"But perhaps you can tell me where I could earn that."

"His father is in our office still; no doubt he would tell you."

Now, for obvious reasons, Helen did not like to go to the office; so she asked faintly if there was anybody else who could tell her.

"I suppose the solicitor could."

"But I don't know who was the solicitor," said Helen, with a sigh.

"Hum!" said the merchant. "Try the bill-broker. I'll give you his address"; and he wrote it down for her.

Helen did not like to be too importunate, and she could not bear to let Wardlaw senior know she loved anybody better than his son; and yet some explanation was necessary: so she told him, as calmly as she could, that her father and herself were both well acquainted with Robert Penfold, and knew many things to his credit.

"I am glad to hear that," said Wardlaw; "and I can believe it. He bore an excellent character here, till, in an evil hour, a strong temptation came, and he fell."

"What! You think he was guilty?"

"I do. Arthur, I believe, has his doubts still. But he is naturally prejudiced in his friend's favor: and, besides, he was not at the trial; I was."

"Thank you, Mr. Wardlaw," said Helen, coldly; and, within five minutes, she was on her way home.

"Arthur prejudiced in Robert Penfold's favor!" That puzzled her extremely.

She put down the whole conversation while her memory was fresh. She added this comment: "What darkness I am groping in!"

Next day she went to the bill-broker, and told him Mr. Wardlaw senior had referred her to him for certain information. Wardlaw's name was evidently a passport. Mr. Adams said obsequiously, "Anything in the world I can do, madam."

"It is about Mr. Robert Penfold. I wish to know the name of the counsel he had at his trial."

"Robert Penfold! What, the forger?"

"He was accused of that crime," said Helen, turning red.

"Accused, madam! He was convicted. I ought to know; for it was my partner he tried the game on. But I was too sharp for him. I had him arrested before he had time to melt the notes; indicted him, and sent him across the herring pond, in spite of his parson's coat, the rascal!"

Helen drew back, as if a serpent had stung her.

"It was you who had him transported!" cried she, turning her eyes on him with horror.

"Of course it was me," said Mr. Adams, firing up; "and I did the country good service. I look upon a forger as worse than a murderer. What is the matter? You are ill."

The poor girl was half fainting at the sight of the man who had destroyed her Robert, and owned it.

"No, no," she cried, hastily; "let me get away—let me get away from here,—you cruel, cruel man!"

She tottered to the door, and got to her carriage, she scarcely knew how, without the information she went for.

The bill-broker was no fool; he saw now how the land lay; he followed her down the stairs, and tried to stammer excuses.

"Charing Cross Hotel," said she faintly, and hid her face against the cushion to avoid the sight of him

When she got home, she cried bitterly at her feminine weakness and her incapacity; and she entered this pitiable failure in her journal with a severity our male readers will hardly, we think, be disposed to imitate; and she added, by way of comment: "Is this how I carry out my poor Robert's precept: Be obstinate as a man; be supple as a woman?"

That night she consulted her father on this difficulty, so slight to any but an inexperienced girl. He told her there must be a report of the trial in the newspapers, and the report would probably mention the counsel; she had better consult a file.

Then the thing was where to find a file. After one or two failures, the British Museum was suggested. She went thither, and could not get in to read without certain formalities. While these were being complied with, she was at a stand-still.

That same evening came a line from Arthur Wardlaw:—

"DEAREST HELEN,—I hear from Mr. Adams that you desire to know the name of the counsel who defended Robert Penfold. It was Mr. Tollemache. He has chambers in Lincoln's Inn.

"Ever devotedly yours,

"ARTHUR WARDLAW."

Helen was touched with this letter, and put it away indorsed with a few words of gratitude and esteem; and copied it into her diary, and remarked, "This is one more warning not to judge hastily. Arthur's agitation was probably only great emotion at the sudden mention of one whose innocence he believes, and whose sad fate distresses him." She wrote back and thanked him sweetly, and in terms that encouraged a visit. Next day she went to Mr. Tollemache. A seedy man followed her at a distance. Mr. Tollemache was not at his chambers, nor expected till four o'clock. He was in court. She left her card, and wrote on it in pencil that she would call at four.

She went at ten minutes after four. Mr. Tollemache declined through his clerk to see her if she was a client; he could only be approached by her solicitor. She felt inclined to go away and cry; but this time she remembered she was to be obstinate as a man and supple as a woman. She wrote on a card: "I am not a client of Mr. Tollemache, but a lady deeply interested in obtaining some information, which Mr. Tollemache can with perfect propriety give me. I trust to his courtesy as a gentleman not to refuse me a short interview."

"Admit the lady," said a sharp little voice.

She was ushered in, and found Mr. Tollemache standing before the fire.

"Now, madam, what can I do for you?"

"Some years ago you defended Mr. Robert Penfold; he was accused of forgery."

"O, was he? I think I remember something about it. A banker's clerk,—wasn't he?"

"O no, sir. A clergyman."

"A clergyman? I remember it perfectly. He was convicted."

"Do you think he was guilty, sir?"

"There was a strong case against him."

"I wish to sift that case."

"Indeed. And you want to go through the papers."

"What papers, sir?"

"The brief for the defence."

"Yes," said Helen, boldly, "would you trust me with that, sir. O, if you knew how deeply I am interested!" The tears were in her lovely eyes.

"The brief has gone back to the solicitor, of course. I dare say he will let you read it upon a proper representation."

"Thank you, sir. Will you tell me who is the solicitor, and where he lives?"

"O, I can't remember who was the solicitor. That is the very first thing you ought to have ascertained. It was no use coming to me."

"Forgive me for troubling you, sir," said Helen, with a deep sigh.

"Not at all, madam; I am only sorry I cannot be of more service. But do let me advise you to employ your solicitor to make these preliminary inquiries. Happy to consult with him, and re-open the matter, should he discover any fresh evidence." He bowed her out, and sat down to a brief while she was yet in sight.

She turned away heart-sick. The advice she had received was good; but she shrank from baring her heart to her father's solicitor.

She sat disconsolate awhile, then ordered another cab, and drove to Wardlaw's office. It was late, and Arthur was gone home; so, indeed, was everybody, except one young subordinate, who was putting up the shutters. "Sir," said she, "can you tell me where old Mr. Penfold lives?"

"Somewhere in the suburbs, miss."

"Yes, sir; but where?"

"I think it is out Pimlico way."

"Could you not give me the street? I would beg on to accept a present if you could."

This sharpened the young gentleman's wits; he went in, and groped here and there till he found the address, and gave it her: No. 3, Fairfield Cottages, Primrose Lane, Pimlico. She gave him a sovereign, to his infinite surprise and delight, and told the cabman to drive to the hotel.

The next moment the man, who had followed her, was chatting familiarly with the subordinate, and helping him put up the shutters.

"I say, Dick," said the youngster, "Penfolds is up in the market; a duchess was here just now, and gave me a sov. to tell her where he lived. Wait a moment till I spit on it for luck."

The agent, however, did not wait to witness that interesting ceremony. He went back to his hansom round the corner, and drove at once to Arthur Wardlaw's house with the information.

Helen noted down Michael Penfold's address in her diary, and would have gone to him that evening, but she was to dine *tête-à-tête* with her father.

Next day she went down to 3 Fairfield Cottages at half past four. On the way her heart palpitated, for this was a very important interview. Here at least she might hope to find some clew, by following out which she would sooner or later establish Robert's innocence. But then came a fearful thought: "Why had not his father done this already, if it was possible to do it? His father must love him. His father must have heard his own story, and tested it in every way. Yet his father remained the servant of a firm, the senior partner of which had told her to her face Robert was guilty."

It was a strange and terrible enigma. Yet she clung to the belief that some new light would come to her from Michael Penfold. Then came bashful fears. "How should she account to Mr. Penfold for the interest she took in his son, she who was affianced to Mr. Penfold's employer." She arrived at 3 Fairfield Cottages with her cheeks burning, and repeating to herself: "Now is the time to be supple as a woman but obstinate as a man."

She sent the cabman in to inquire for Mr. Penfold; a sharp girl of about thirteen came out to her, and told her Mr. Penfold was not at home.

"Can you tell me when he will be at home?"

"No, miss. He have gone to Scotland. A telegram came from Wardlaw's last night, as he was to go to Scotland first thing this morning; and he went at six o'clock."

"O, dear! How unfortunate!"

"Who shall I say called, miss?"

"Thank you, I will write. What time did the telegram come?"

"Between five and six last evening, miss."

She returned to the hotel. Fate seemed to be against her. Baffled at the very threshold! And hotel she found Arthur Wardlaw's card, and a beautiful bouquet.

She sat down directly, and wrote to him affectionately, and asked him in the postscript if he could send her a report of the trial. She received a reply directly, that he had inquired in the office, for one of the clerks had reports of it; but this clerk was unfortunately out, and had locked up his desk.

Helen sighed. Her feet seemed to be clogged at every step in this inquiry.

Next morning however, a large envelope came for her, and a Mr. Hand wrote to her thus:—

"MADAM,

"Having been requested by Mr. Arthur Wardlaw to send you my extracts of a trial, the Queen v. Penfold, I herewith forward the same, and would feel obliged by your returning them at your convenience.

"Your obedient servant,
"JAMES HAND."

Helen took the enclosed extracts to her bedroom, and there read them both over many times.

In both these reports the case for the Crown was neat, clear, cogent, straightforward, and supported by evidence. The defence was chiefly argument of counsel to prove the improbability of a clergyman and a man of good character passing a forged note. One of the reports stated that Mr. Arthur Wardlaw, a son of the principal witness, had taken the accusation so much to heart that he was now dangerously ill at Oxford. The other report did not contain this, but, on the other hand, it stated that the prisoner, after conviction, had endeavored to lay the blame on Mr. Arthur Wardlaw, but that the judge had stopped him, and said he could only aggravate his offence by endeavoring to cast a slur upon the Wardlaws, who had both shown a manifest desire to shield him, but were powerless for want of evidence.

In both reports the summing up of the judge was moderate in expression, but leaned against the prisoner on every point, and corrected the sophistical reasoning of his counsel very sensibly. Both reports said an expert was called for the prisoner, whose ingenuity made the court smile, but did not counterbalance the evidence. Helen sat cold as ice with the extracts in her hand.

Not that her sublime faith was shaken, but that poor Robert appeared to have been so calmly and fairly dealt with by everybody. Even Mr. Heames, the counsel for the Crown, had opened the case with humane regret, and confined himself to facts, and said nobody would be more pleased than he would, if this evidence could be contradicted, or explained in a manner consistent with the prisoner's innocence.

What a stone she had undertaken to roll — up what a hill!

What was to be her next step? Go to the Museum, which was now open to her, and read more reports? She shrank from that.

"The newspapers are all against him," said she; "and I don't want to be told he is guilty, when I know he is innocent."

She now re-examined the extracts with a view to names, and found the only names mentioned were those of the counsel. The expert's name was not given in either. However, she knew that from Robert. She resolved to speak to Mr. Hennessy first, and try and get at the defendant's solicitor through him.

She found him out by the Law Directory, and called at a few minutes past four.

Hennessy was almost the opposite to Tollemache. He was about the size of a gentleman's wardrobe; and, like most enormous men, good-natured. He received her, saw with his practised eye that she was no common person, and, after a slight hesitation on professional grounds, heard her request. He sent for his note-book, found the case in one moment, remastered it in another, and told her the solicitor for the Crown in that case was Freshfield.

"Now," said he, "you want to know who was the defendant's solicitor? Jenkins, a stamped envelope. Write your name and address on that."

While she was doing it, he scratched a line to Mr. Freshfield, asking him to send the required information to the enclosed address.

She thanked Mr. Hennessy with the tears in her eyes.

"I dare not ask you whether you think him guilty," she said.

Hennessy shook his head with an air of good-natured rebuke.

"You must not cross-examine counsel," said he: "but, if it will be any comfort to you, I'll say this much, there was just a shadow of doubt, and Tollemache certainly let a chance slip. If I had defended your friend, I would have insisted on a postponement of the trial until this Arthur Wardlaw" (looking at his note-book) "could be examined, either in court or otherwise, if he was really dying. Is he dead, do you know?"

"No."

"I thought not. Sick witnesses are often at death's door; but I never knew one pass the threshold. Ha! ha! The trial ought to have been postponed till he got well. If a judge refused me a postponement in such a case, I would make him so odious to the jury, that the prisoner would get a verdict in spite of his teeth."

"Then, you think he was badly defended?"

"No; that is saying a great deal more than I could justify. But there are counsel who trust too much to their powers of reasoning, and underrate a chink in the evidence *pro* or *con*. Practice, and a few back-falls, cure them of that."

Mr. Hennessy uttered this general observation with a certain change of tone, which showed he thought he had said as much or more than his visitor had any right to expect from him; and she therefore left him, repeating her thanks. She went home, pondering on every word he had said, and entered it all in her journal, with the remark, "How strange! the first doubt of Robert's guilt comes to me from the lawyer who caused him to be found guilty. He calls it the shadow of a doubt."

That very evening, Mr. Freshfield had the cour-

tesy to send her by messenger the name and address of the solicitor who had defended Robert Penfold. Lovejoy and James, Lincoln's Inn Fields. She called on them, and sent in her card. She was kept waiting a long time in the outer office, and felt ashamed, and sick at heart, seated among young clerks. At last she was admitted, and told Mr. Lovejoy she and her father, General Rolleston, were much interested in a late client of his, Mr. Robert Penfold; and would he be kind enough to let her see the brief for the defence?

"Are you a relation of the Penfolds, madam?"

"No, sir," said Helen, blushing.

"Humph!" said Lovejoy.

He touched a hand-bell. A clerk appeared.

"Ask Mr. Upton to come to me."

Mr. Upton, the managing clerk, came in due course, and Mr. Lovejoy asked him:—

"Who instructed us in the Queen v. Penfold?"

"It was Mr. Michael Penfold, sir."

Mr. Lovejoy then told Helen that she must just get a line from Mr. Michael Penfold, and then the papers should be submitted to her.

"Yes; but, sir," said Helen, "Mr. Penfold is in Scotland."

"Well, but you can write to him."

"No; I don't know in what part of Scotland he is."

"Then you are not very intimate with him?"

"No, sir; my acquaintance is with Mr. Robert Penfold."

"Have you a line from him?"

"I have no *written* authority from him; but will you not take my word that I act by his desire?"

"My dear madam," said the lawyer, "we go by rule. There are certain forms to be observed in these things. I am sure your own good sense will tell you it would be cruel and improper of me to submit those papers without an order from Robert or Michael Penfold. Pray consider this as a delay, not a refusal."

"Yes, sir," said Helen; "but I meet with nothing but delays, and my heart is breaking under them."

The solicitor looked sorry, but would not act irregularly. She went home sighing, and condemned to wait the return of Michael Penfold.

The cab-door was opened for her by a seedy man she fancied she had seen before.

Baffled thus, and crippled in every movement she made, however slight, in favor of Robert Penfold, she was seduced on the other hand into all the innocent pleasures of the town. Her adventure had transpired somehow or other, and all General Rolleston's acquaintances hunted him up; and both father and daughter were courted by people of ton as lions. A shipwrecked beauty is not offered to society every day. Even her own sex raved about her, and about the chain of beautiful pearls she had picked up somehow on her desolate island. She always wore them; they linked her to that sacred purpose she seemed to be forgetting. Her father drew her with him into the vortex, hiding from her that he embarked in it principally for her sake, and she went down the current with him out of filial duty. Thus unfathomable difficulties thrust her back from her up-hill task: and the world, with soft but powerful hand, drew her away to it. Arthur brought her a choice bouquet, or sent her a choice bouquet, every evening, but otherwise did not intrude much upon her; and though she was sure he would assist her, if she asked him, gratitude and delicacy forbade

her to call him again to her assistance. She preferred to await the return of Michael Penfold. She had written to him at the office to tell him she had news of his son, and begged him to give her instant notice of his return from Scotland.

Day after day passed, and he did not write to her. She began to chafe, and then to pine. Her father saw, and came to a conclusion that her marriage with Arthur ought to be hastened. He resolved to act quietly but firmly towards that end.

CHAPTER LVI.

UP to this time Helen's sex, and its attributes, had been a great disadvantage to her. She had been stopped on the very threshold of her inquiry by petty difficulties, which a man would have soon surmounted. But one fine day the scale gave a little turn, and she made a little discovery, thanks to her sex. Women, whether it is that they are born to be followed, or are accustomed to be followed, seem to have eyes in the backs of their heads, and instinct to divine when somebody is after them. This inexperienced girl, who had missed seeing many things our readers have seen, observed in merely passing her window a seedy man in the courtyard of the hotel. Would you believe it, she instantly recognized the man who had opened her cab-door for her in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Quick as lightning it passed through her mind, "Why do I see the same figure in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and at Charing Cross." At various intervals she passed the window; and twice she saw the man again. She pondered, and determined to try a little experiment. Robert Penfold, it may be remembered, had mentioned an expert as one of the persons she was to see. She had looked for his name in the Directory; but experts were not down in the book. Another fatality! But at last she had found Undercliff, a lithographer, and she fancied that must be the same person. She did not hope to learn much from him; the newspapers said his evidence had caused a smile. She had a distinct object in visiting him, the nature of which will appear. She ordered a cab, and dressed herself. She came down, and entered the cab; but, instead of telling the man where to drive, she gave him a slip of paper, containing the address of the lithographer. "Drive there," said she, a little mysteriously. The cabman winked, suspecting an intrigue, and went off to the place. There she learned Mr. Undercliff had moved to Frith Street, Soho, number not known. She told the cabman to drive slowly up and down the street, but could not find the name. At last she observed some lithographs in a window. She let the cabman go all down the street, then stopped him, and paid him off. She had no sooner done this than she walked very briskly back, and entered the little shop, and inquired for Mr. Undercliff. He was out, and not expected back for an hour. "I will wait," said Helen; and she sat down with her head upon her white hand. A seedy man passed the window rapidly with a busy air; and, if his eye shot a glance into the shop, it was so slight and careless nobody could suspect he was a spy, and had done his work effectually as he flashed by. In that moment the young lady, through the chink of her fingers, which she had opened for that purpose, not only recognized the man, but noticed his face, his hat, his waistcoat, his dirty linen, and the pin in his neck-tie.

"Ah!" said she, and flushed to the brow.

She lifted up her head and became conscious of a formidable old woman, who was standing behind the counter at a side door, eying her with the severest scrutiny. This old woman was tall and thin, and had a fine face, the lower part of which was as fine as mine enough; but the forehead and brows were alarming. Though her hair was silvery, the temples were black and shaggy, and the forehead was creased by a vertical furrow into two temples. Under those shaggy eyebrows shone dark-gray eyes, and passed for black with most people; and those eyes were fixed on Helen, reading her. Helen's hazel eyes returned their gaze. She blushed, and still looking, said, "Pray, madam, can I see Mr. Undercliff?"

"My son is out for the day, miss," said the old lady, civilly.

"O, dear! how unfortunate I am!" said Helen with a sigh.

"He comes back to-night. You can see him to-morrow at ten o'clock. A question of handwriting?"

"Not exactly," said Helen; "but he was witness in favor of a person, I know was innocent."

"But he was found guilty," said the other with cool keenness.

"Yes, madam: and he has no friend to clear him but me: a poor weak girl, baffled and defeated whichever way I turn." She began to cry.

The old woman looked at her crying with that steady composure which marks her sex on these occasions; and, when she was better, said quietly "You are not so weak as you think." She added, after a while, "If you wish to retain my son, you had better leave a fee."

"With pleasure, madam. What is the fee?"

"One guinea. Of course, there is a separate charge for any work he may do for you."

"That is but reasonable, madam." And with this she paid the fee, and rose to go.

"Shall I send any one home with you?"

"No, thank you," said Helen. "Why?"

"Because you are followed, and because you are not used to be followed."

"Why, how did you find that out?"

"By your face, when a man passed the window, — a shabby-genteel fellow; he was employed by some gentleman, no doubt. Such faces as yours will be followed in London. If you feel uneasy, miss, I will put on my bonnet, and see you home."

Helen was surprised at this act of substantial civility from the Gorgon. "O, thank you, Mrs. Undercliff," said she. "No, I am not the least afraid. Let them follow me, I am doing nothing that I am ashamed of. Indeed, I am glad I am thought worth the trouble of following. It shows me I am not so thoroughly contemptible. Good-by, and many thanks. Ten o'clock to-morrow."

And she walked home without looking once behind her till the Hotel was in sight; then she stopped at a shop-window, and in a moment her swift eye embraced the whole landscape. But the shabby-genteel man was nowhere in sight.

CHAPTER LVII.

WHEN Joseph Wylie disappeared from the scene, Nancy Rouse made a discovery, which very often follows the dismissal of a suitor, — that she was con-

derably more attached to him than she had thought. The house became dull, the subordinate washerwomen languid: their taciturnity irritated and depressed Nancy by turns.

In the midst of this, Michael Penfold discovered that Helen had come back safe. He came into her parlor, beaming with satisfaction, and told her of the good news. It gave her immense delight at first, but, when she had got used to her joy on that score, he began to think she had used Joe Wylie very ill. Now that Helen was saved, she could no longer realize that Wylie was so very much to blame.

She even persuaded herself that his disappearance was the act of a justly offended man: and, as he belonged to a class, of whose good sense she had a poor opinion, she was tormented with fears that he would do some desperate act, — drown himself, or go to sea; or, worst of all, marry some trollop. She became very anxious and unhappy. Before this misfortune she used to go about singing the first verse of a song, and whistling the next, like any ploughboy; an eccentric performance, but it made the house gay. Now both song and whistle were suspended! and, instead, it was all hard work and hard crying; turn about.

She attached herself to Michael Penfold because he had known trouble, and was sympathetic: and these two opened their hearts to one another, and formed a friendship that was very honest and touching.

The scene of their conversation and mutual consolation was Nancy's parlor; a little mite of a room she had partitioned off from her business. "For," said she, "a lady I'll be, — after my work is done, — if it is only in a cupboard." The room had a remarkably large fireplace, which had originally warmed the whole floor, but now was used as a ventilator only. The gas would have been stifling without it. As for lighting a fire in it, that was out of the question.

On a certain evening, soon after Mr. Penfold's return from Scotland, the pair sat over their tea, and the conversation fell on the missing sweetheart. Michael had been thinking it over, and was full of encouragement. He said: —

"Miss Rouse, something tells me that, if poor Mr. Wylie could only know your heart, he would turn up again directly. What we ought to do is to send somebody to look for him in all the sailors' haunts: some sharp fellow, — dear me, what a knocking they keep up next door!"

"O, that is always the way when one wants a quiet chat. Drat the woman! I'll have her indicted."

"No, you won't, Miss Rouse: she is a poor soul, and has got no business except letting lodgings; she is not like you. But I do hope she will be so kind as not to come quite through the wall."

"Dear heart!" said Nancy, "go on, and never mind her noise, which it is worse than a horgan-grinder."

"Well, then, if you can't find him that way, I say, — Advertise."

"Me!" cried Nancy, turning very red. "Do I look like a woman as would advertise for a man?"

"No, ma'am: quite the reverse. But what I mean is, you might put in something not too plain. For instance: If J. W. will return to N. R., all will be forgotten and forgiven."

"He'd have the upper hand of me for life," said Nancy. "No, no; I won't advertise for the fool. What right had he to run off at the first word? He

ought to know my bark is worse than my bite by this time. You can, though."

"Me bite, ma'am?" said the old gentleman.

"Bite? no: advertise, since you're so fond of it. Come, you sit down and write one; and I'll pay for it, for that matter."

Michael sat down, and drew up the following: "If Mr. Joseph Wylie will call on Michael Penfold, at No. 3, E. C., he will hear of something to his advantage."

"To his advantage?" said Nancy, doubtfully.

"Why not tell him the truth?"

"Why, that is the truth, ma'am. Is n't to his advantage to be reconciled to an honest, virtuous, painstaking lady, that honors him with her affection — and me with her friendship? Besides, it is the common form; and there is nothing like sticking to form."

"Mr. Penfold," said Nancy, "any one can see you was born a gentleman; and I am a deal prouder to have you and your washing, than I should him as pays you your wages: pale eyes, — pale hair, — pale eyebrows, — I would n't trust him to mangle a duster."

"O Miss Rouse! Pray, don't disparage my good master to me."

"I can't help it, sir: thought is free, especially in this here compartment. Better speak one's mind than die o' the sulks. So shut your ear when my music jars. But one every other day is enough: if he won't come back for that, why he must go, and I must look out for another; there's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. Still, I'll not deny I have a great respect for poor Joe. O Mr. Penfold, what shall I do! Oh, oh, oh!"

"There, there," said Michael, "I'll put this into the *Times* every day."

"You are a good soul, Mr. Penfold. Oh — oh, oh!"

When he had finished the advertisement in a clerly hand, and she had finished her cry, she felt comparatively comfortable, and favored Mr. Penfold with some reflections.

"Dear heart, Mr. Penfold, how you and I do take to one another, to be sure. But so we ought: for we are honest folk, the pair, and has had a hard time. Don't it never strike you rather curious that two thousand pounds was at the bottom of both our troubles, yours and mine? I might have married Joe and been a happy woman with him; but the devil puts in my head — There you go again hammering! Life ain't worth having next door to that lodging-house. Drat the woman, if she must peck, why don't she go in the churchyard and peck her own grave; which we shall never be quiet till she is there: and these here gimcrack houses, they won't stand no more pecking at than a soap-sud. — Ay, that's what hurts me, Mr. Penfold: the Lord had given him and me health and strength and honesty; our betters had wed for love and wrought for money, as the saying is; but I must go again Nature, that cried 'Come couple'; and must bargain for two thousand pounds. So now I've lost the man, and not got the money, nor never shall: and, if I had, I'd burn — Ah — ah — ah — ah — ah!"

This tirade ended in stifled screams of terror, caused by the sudden appearance of a human hand, in a place and in a manner well adapted to shake the stoutest laundress's nerves.

This hand came through the brickwork of the chimney-place, and there remained a moment or two: then slowly retired, and, as it retired, some-

thing was heard to fall upon the shavings and tinsel of the fireplace.

Nancy, by a feminine impulse, put her hands before her face, to hide this supernatural hand; and, when she found courage to withdraw them, and glare at the place, there was no aperture whatever in the brick-work; and, consequently, the hand appeared to have traversed the solid material, both coming and going.

"O Mr. Penfolds," cried Nancy; "I'm a sinful woman. This comes of talking of the devil arter sunset"; and she sat trembling so that the very floor shook.

Mr. Penfold's nerves were not strong. He and Nancy both huddled together for mutual protection, and their faces had not a vestige of color left in them.

However, after a period of general paralysis, Penfold whispered:—

"I heard it drop something on the shavings."

"Then we shall be all in a blaze o' brimstone," shrieked Nancy, wringing her hands.

And they waited to see.

Then, as no conflagration took place, Mr. Penfold got up, and said he must go and see what it was the hand had dropped.

Nancy, in whom curiosity was beginning to battle with terror, let him go to the fireplace without a word of objection, and then cried out. —

"Don't go anigh it, sir; it will do you a mischief; don't touch it whatever. *Take the tongs.*"

He took the tongs, and presently flung into the middle of the room a small oilskin packet. This, as it lay on the ground, they both eyed like two deer glowering at a piece of red cloth, and ready to leap back over the moon if it should show signs of biting. But oilskin is not preternatural, nor has tradition connected it, however remotely, with the Enemy of man.

Consequently, a great revulsion took place in Nancy, and she passed from fear to indignation at having been frightened so.

She ran to the fireplace, and, putting her head up the chimney, screamed, "Heave your dirt where you heave your love, ye Brazen!"

While she was outjarguing her neighbor, whom, with feminine justice, she held responsible for every act done in her house, Penfold undid the packet, and Nancy returned to her seat, with her mind more at ease, to examine the contents.

"Bank-notes!" cried Penfold.

"Ay," said Nancy, incredulously, "they do look like bank-notes, and feel like 'em; but they ain't wrote like them. Bank-notes ain't wrote black like that in the left-hand corner."

Penfold explained.

"Ten-pound notes are not, nor fives; but large notes are. These are all fifties."

"Fifty whats?"

"Fifty pounds."

"What, each of them bits of paper worth fifty pounds?"

"Yes, let us count them; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.—O Lord!—40, why, it is two thousand pounds—just two thousand pounds. It is the very sum that ruined me; it did not belong to me, and it's being in the house ruined my poor Robert. And this does not belong to you. Lock all the doors, bar all the windows and burn them before the police come."

"Wait a bit," said Nancy, "wait a bit."

They sat on each side of the notes; Penfold agitated and terrified, Nancy confounded and bewildered.

CHAPTER LVIII

PUNCTUALLY at ten o'clock Helen returned; Frith Street, and found Mr. Undercliff behind sort of counter, employed in tracing; a workman was seated at some little distance from him; he bent on their work.

"Mr. Undercliff?" said Helen.

He rose, and turned towards her politely, — a fair man, with a keen gray eye and a pleasant voice and manner: "I am Edward Undercliff. Is come by appointment?"

"Yes, sir."

"A question of handwriting?"

"Not entirely, sir. Do you remember giving witness in favor of a young clergyman, Mr. Robert Penfold, who was accused of forgery?"

"I remember the circumstance, but not the details."

"O, dear! that is unfortunate," said Helen, with deep sigh; she often had to sigh now.

"Why, you see," said the Expert, "I am called on such a multitude of trials. However, I take notes of the principal ones. What year was it in?"

"In 1864."

Mr. Undercliff went to a set of drawers arranged chronologically, and found his notes directly. "It was a forged bill, madam, indorsed and presented by Penfold. I was called to prove that the bill was not in the handwriting of Penfold. Here is my fac-simile of the Robert Penfold indorsed upon the bill by the prisoner." He handed it her, and she examined it with interest. "And here are fac-similes of genuine writing by John Wardlaw; and here is a copy of the forged note."

He laid it on the table before her. She started, and eyed it with horror. It was a long time before she could speak. At length she said, "And that wicked piece of paper destroyed Robert Penfold."

"Not that piece of paper, but the original; this is a fac-simile, so far as the writing is concerned. It was not necessary in this case to imitate paper and color. Stay, here is a sheet on which I have lithographed the three styles: that will enable you to follow my comparison. But perhaps that would not interest you." Helen had the tact to say it would. Thus encouraged, the Expert showed her that Robert Penfold's writing had nothing in common with the forged note. He added, "I also detected in the forged note habits which were entirely absent from the true writing of John Wardlaw. You will understand there were plenty of undoubted specimens in Court to go by."

"Then, O sir," said Helen, "Robert Penfold was not guilty."

"Certainly not of writing the forged note. I swore that, and I'll swear it again. But when it came to questions whether he had passed the note, and whether he knew it was forged, that was quite out of my province."

"I can understand that," said Helen; "but you heard the trial; you are very intelligent, sir, you must have formed some opinion as to whether he was guilty or not."

The Expert shook his head. "Madam," said he, "mine is a profound and difficult art, which aims at

certainties. Very early in my career I found that to master that art I must be single-minded, and not allow my ear to influence my eye. By purposely voiding all reasoning from external circumstances, I have distanced my competitors in expertise; but I sometimes think I have rather weakened my powers of conjecture through disuse. Now, if my mother had been at the trial, she would give you an opinion of some value on the outside facts. But that is not my line. If you feel sure he was innocent, and want me to aid you, you must get hold of the handwriting of every person who was likely to know old Wardlaw's handwriting, and so might have imitated it; all the clerks in his office, to begin with. Nail the forger; that is your only chance."

"What, sir!" said Helen, with surprise, "if you saw the true handwriting of the person who wrote that forged note, should you recognize it?"

"Why not? It is difficult; but I have done it hundreds of times."

"Oh! Is forgery so common?"

"No: but I am in all the cases; and, besides, I do a great deal in a business that requires the same kind of expertise,—anonymous letters. I detect assassins of that kind by the score. A gentleman or lady, down in the country, gets a poisoned arrow by the post, or perhaps a shower of them. They are always in disguised handwriting; those who receive them send them up to me, with writings of all the people they suspect. The disguise is generally more or less superficial; five or six unconscious habits remain below it, and often these undisguised habits are the true characteristics of the writer. And I'll tell you something curious, madam; it is quite common for all the suspected people to be innocent; and then I write back, 'Send me the handwriting of the people you suspect the least'; and amongst them I often find the assassin."

"O Mr. Undercliff," said Helen, "you make my heart sick."

"O, it is a vile world, for that matter," said the Expert; "and the country no better than the town, for all it looks so sweet with its green fields and purring rills. There they sow anonymous letters like barley: the very girls wrote anonymous letters that make my hair stand on end. Yes, it is a vile world."

"Don't you believe him, miss," said Mrs. Undercliff, appearing suddenly. Then, turning to her son, "How can you measure the world? You live in a little one of your own,—a world of forgers and anonymous writers; you see so many of these, you fancy they are common as dirt; but they are only common to you because they all come your way."

"O, that is it, is it?" said the Expert, doubtfully.

"Yes, that is it, Ned," said the old lady, quietly; then, after a pause she said, "I want you to do your very best for this young lady."

"I always do," said the Artist. "But how can I judge without materials? And she brings me none."

Mrs. Undercliff turned to Helen, and said: "Have you brought him nothing at all, no handwritings—in your bag?"

Then Helen sighed again. "I have no handwriting except Mr. Penfold's; but I have two printed reports of the trial."

"Printed reports," said the Expert, "they are no use to me. Ah! here is an outline I took of the prisoner during the trial. You can read faces: tell the lady whether he was guilty or not," and he handed the profile to his mother with an ironical look; not that he doubted her proficiency in the

rival art of reading faces, but that he doubted the existence of the art.

Mrs. Undercliff took the profile, and, coloring slightly, said to Miss Rolleston, "It is living faces I profess to read: there I can see the movement of the eyes and other things that my son here has not studied." Then she scrutinized the profile. "It is a very handsome face," said she.

The Expert chuckled. "There's a woman's judgment," said he. "Handsome! the fellow I got transported for life down at Exeter was an Adonis, and forged wills, bonds, and powers of attorney by the dozen."

"There's something noble about this face," said Mrs. Undercliff, ignoring the interruption,—"and yet something simple. I think him more likely to be a cat's-paw than a felon." Having delivered this with a certain modest dignity, she laid the profile on the counter before Helen.

The Expert had a wonderful eye and hand; it was a good thing for society he had elected to be gamekeeper instead of poacher, detector of forgery instead of forger. No photograph was ever truer than this outline. Helen started, and bowed her head over the sketch to conceal the strong and various emotions that swelled at sight of the portrait of her martyr. In vain; if the eyes were hidden the tender bosom heaved, the graceful body quivered, and the tears fell fast upon the counter.

Mrs. Undercliff was womanly enough, though she looked like the late Lord Thurlow in petticoats; and she instantly aided the girl to hide her beating heart from the man, though that man was her son. She distracted his attention. "Give me all your notes, Ned," said she, "and let me see whether I can make something of them; but first perhaps Miss Rolleston will empty her bag on the counter. Go back to your work a moment, for I know you have enough to do."

The Expert was secretly glad to be released from a case in which there were no materials; and so Helen escaped unobserved except by one of her own sex. She saw directly what Mrs. Undercliff had done for her, and lifted her sweet eyes, thick with tears, to thank her. Mrs. Undercliff smiled maternally, and next these two ladies did a stroke of business in the twinkling of an eye, and without a word spoken; whereof anon. Helen being once more composed, Mrs. Undercliff took up the prayer-book, and asked her with some curiosity what could be in that.

"O," said Helen, "only some writing of Mr. Penfold. Mr. Undercliff does not want to see that; he is already sure Robert Penfold never wrote that wicked thing."

"Yes, but I should like to see some more of his handwriting, for all that," said the Expert, looking suddenly up.

"But it is only in pencil."

"Never mind; you need not fear I shall alter my opinion."

Helen colored high. "You are right; and I should disgrace my good cause by withholding anything from your inspection. There, sir." And she opened the prayer-book, and laid Cooper's dying words before the Expert; he glanced over them with an eye like a bird, and compared them with his notes.

"Yes," said he, "that is Robert Penfold's writing, and I say again that hand never wrote the forged note."

"Let me see that," said Mrs. Undercliff.

"O, yes," said Helen, rather irresolutely; "but you look into the things as well as the writing, and I promised papa—"

"Can't you trust me?" said Mrs. Undercliff, turning suddenly cold and a little suspicious.

"O, yes, madam; and indeed I have nothing to reproach myself with. But my papa is anxious. However, I am sure you are my friend; and all I ask is that you will never mention to a soul what you read there."

"I promise that," said the elder lady, and instantly bent her black brows upon the writing. And, as she did so, Helen observed her countenance rise, as a face is very apt to do when its owner enters on congenial work.

"You would have made a great mistake to keep this from me," said she, gravely. Then she pondered profoundly; then she turned to her son and said, "Why, Edward, this is the very young lady who was wrecked in the Pacific Ocean, and cast on a desolate island. We have all read about you in the papers, miss; and I felt for you, for one, but, of course, not as I do now I have seen you. You must let me go into this with you."

"Ah, if you would!" said Helen. "O madam, I have gone through tortures already for want of somebody of my own sex to keep me in countenance! O, if you could have seen how I have been received, with what cold looks, and sometimes with impertinent stares, before I could even penetrate into the region of those cold looks and petty formalities! Any miserable straw was excuse enough to stop me on my errand of justice and mercy and gratitude."

"Gratitude?"

"O, yes, madam. The papers have only told you that I was shipwrecked and cast away. They don't tell you that Robert Penfold warned me the ship was to be destroyed, and I disbelieved and affronted him in return, and he never reproached me, not even by a look. And we were in a boat with the sailors, all starved—not hungry: starved—and mad with thirst, and yet in his own agony he hid something for me to eat. All his thought, all his fear, was for me. Such things are not done in those great extremities of the poor, vulgar, suffering body, except by angels, in whom the soul rises above the flesh. And he is such an angel. I have had a knife lifted over me to kill me, madam,—yes: and again it was he who saved me. I owe my life to him on the island over and over again; and in return I have promised to give him back his honor, that he values far more than life, as all such noble spirits do. Ah, my poor martyr, how feebly I plead your cause! O, help me! pray, pray, help me! All is so dark, and I so weak, so weak." Again the loving eyes streamed; and this time not an eye was dry in the little shop.

The Expert flung down his tracing with something between a groan and a curse. "Who can do that drudgery," he cried, "whilst the poor young lady—Mother, you take it in hand; find me some material, though it is no bigger than a fly's foot, give me but a clew no thicker than a spider's web, and I'll follow it through the whole labyrinth. But you see I'm impotent; there's no basis for me. It is a case for you. It wants a shrewd sagacious body that can read facts and faces; and—I won't jest any more, Miss Rolleston, for you are deeply in earnest.—Well, then, she really is a woman with a wonderful insight into facts and faces. She has got a way of reading them as I read handwriting; and

she must have taken a great fancy to you, first rule she never does us the honor to meddle."

"Have you taken a fancy to me, madam?" said Helen, modestly and tenderly, yet half archly.

"That I have," said the other. "Those eyes of yours went straight into my heart last night, and should not be here this morning. That's part owing to my own eyes being so dark and yours so loveliest hazel. It is twenty years since eyes of yours have gazed into mine. Diamonds are as half so rare, nor a tenth part so lovely, to my eye." She turned her head away, melted probably by some tender reminiscence. It was only for a moment. She turned round again, and said quietly, "Yes, Ned, I should like to try what I can do. I think you said these are reports of his trial. Begin by reading them."

She read them both very slowly and carefully, and her face grew like a judge's, and Helen watched each shade of expression with deep anxiety.

That powerful countenance showed alacrity at first: then doubt, and difficulty, and at last dejection. Helen's heart turned cold, and for a first time she began to despair. For now a shrewd person, with a plain prejudice in her favor and Edward's, was staggered by the simple facts of a trial.

CHAPTER LIX.

MRS. UNDERCLIFF, having read the reports avoided Helen's eye (another bad sign). She turned to Mr. Undercliff, and, probably because the perusal of the reports had disappointed her, said, almost angrily, "Edward, what did you say to make them laugh at that trial? Both these papers say that 'an Expert' was called, whose ingenuity made the court smile, but did not counterbalance the evidence."

"Why, that is a falsehood on the face of it," said the Expert, turning red. "I was called simply and solely to prove Penfold did not write the forged note; I proved it to the judge's satisfaction, and he directed the prisoner to be acquitted on that count. Miss Rolleston, the lawyers often do sneer at experts; but then four experts out of five are rank impostors,—a set of theorists, who go by arbitrary rules framed in the closet, and not by large and laborious comparison with indisputable documents. These charlatans are not aware that five thousand cramped and tremulous, but genuine, signatures are written every day by honest men, and so they denounce every cramped or tremulous writing as a forgery. The varieties in a man's writing, caused by his writing with his glove on or off, with a quill or a bad steel pen, drunk or sober, calm or agitated, in full daylight or dusk, etc. etc., all this is a dead letter to them, and they have a bias towards suspicion of forgery; and a banker's clerk, with his mere general impression, is better evidence than they are. But I am an artist of a very different stamp. I never reason *a priori*. I compare; and I have no bias. I never will have. The judges know this, and the pains and labor I take to be right, and they treat me with courtesy. At Penfold's trial the matter was easy; I showed the court he had not written the note, and my evidence crushed the indictment so far. How could they have laughed at my testimony? Why, they acted upon it. Those reports are not worth a straw. What journals were they cut out of?"

"I don't know," said Helen.

"Is there nothing on the upper margin to how?"

"No."

"What, not on either of them?"

"No."

"Show them me, please. This is a respectable paper too: the *Daily News*."

"O Mr. Undercliff, how can you know that?"

"I don't *know* it; but I think so, because the type and paper are like that journal; the conductors are of a kind of clean type; so am I. Why, here is another misstatement; the judge never said he aggravated his offence by trying to cast a slur upon the *Wardlaws*. I'll swear the judge never said a syllable of the kind. What he said was 'You can speak in arrest of judgment on grounds of law, but you must not impugn the verdict with facts.' That was the only time he spoke to the prisoner at all. These reports are not worth a button."

Helen lifted up her hands and eyes in despair. "Where shall I find the truth?" said she. "The world is a quicksand."

"My dear young lady," said Mrs. Undercliff, "don't you be discouraged: there must be a correct report in some paper or other."

"I am not so sure of that," said Undercliff. "I believe the reporters trundle off to the nearest public-house together, and light their pipes with their notes, and settle something or other by memory. Indeed, they have reached a pitch of inaccuracy that could not be attained without co-operation. Independent liars contradict each other: but these chaps follow one another in falsehood, like geese toddling after one another across a common."

"Come, come," said Mrs. Undercliff, "if you can't help us, don't hurt us. We don't want a man to talk yellow jaundice to us. Miss Rolleston must employ somebody to read all the other papers and compare the reports with these."

"I'll employ nobody but myself," said Helen. "I'll go to the British Museum directly."

"The Museum!" cried Mr. Undercliff, looking up with surprise. "Why, they will be half an hour groping for a copy of the *Times*. No, no; go to Peele's Coffee House." He directed her where to find that place; and she was so eager to do something for Robert, however small, that she took up her bag directly, and put up the prayer-book, and was going to ask for her extracts, when she observed Mr. Undercliff was scrutinizing them with great interest, so she thought she would leave them with him; but, on looking more closely, she found that he was examining, not the reports, but the advertisements and miscellanea on the reverse side.

She waited out of politeness, but she colored and bit her lip. She could not help feeling hurt and indignant. "Any trash is more interesting to people than poor Robert's case," she thought. And at last she said bitterly,

"Those advertisements seem to interest you, sir; shall I leave them with you?"

"If you please," said the Expert, over whose head, bent in dogged scrutiny, this small thunderbolt of feminine wrath passed unconscious.

Helen drove away to Peele's Coffee House.

Mrs. Undercliff pondered over the facts that had been elicited in this conversation; the Expert remained absorbed in the advertisements at the back of Helen's reports.

When he had examined every one of them minutely, he held the entire extracts up to the light, and looked through them; then he stuck a double

magnifier in his eye, and looked through them with that. Then he took two pieces of card, wrote on them *Re Penfold*, and looked about for his other materials, to put them all neatly together. Lo! the profile of Robert Penfold was gone.

"Now that is too bad," said he. "So much for her dovelike eyes, that you admired so. Miss Innocence has stolen that profile."

"Stolen! she bought it — of me."

"Why, she never said a word."

"No; but she looked a look. She asked me, with those sweet imploring eyes, might she have it; and I looked yes: then she glanced towards you, and put down a note. Here it is."

"Why, you beat the telegraph, you two! Ten pounds for that thing! I must make it up to her somehow."

"I wish you could. Poor girl, she is a lady every inch. But she is in love with that Penfold. I'm afraid it is a hopeless case."

"I have seen a plainer. But hopeless it is not. However, you work your way, and I'll work mine."

"But you can't; you have no materials."

"No; but I have found a door that may lead to materials."

Having delivered himself thus mysteriously, he shut himself up in obstinate silence until Helen Rolleston called again, two days afterwards. She brought a bag full of manuscript this time: to wit, copies in her own handwriting of eight reports, the *Queen v. Penfold*. She was in good spirits, and told Mrs. Undercliff that all the reports were somewhat more favorable than the two she had left; and she was beginning to tell Mr. Undercliff he was quite right in his recollection, when he interrupted her, and said, "All that is secondary now. Have you any objection to answer me a question?"

She colored; but said, "O, no. Ask me anything you like"; then she blushed deeper.

"How did you become possessed of those two reports you left with me the other day?"

At this question, so different from what she feared, Helen cleared up and smiled, and said, "From a Mr. Hand, a clerk in Mr. Wardlaw's office; they were sent me at my request."

The Expert seemed pleased at this reply; his brow cleared, and he said, "Then I don't mind telling you that those two reports will bring Penfold's case within my province. To speak plainly, Miss Rolleston, your newspaper extracts — ARE FORGERIES."

CHAPTER LX.

"FORGERIES!" cried Helen, with innocent horror.

"RANK FORGERIES," repeated the Expert, coolly.

"Forgeries!" cried Helen, "Why, how can printed things be that?"

"That is what I should like to know," said the old lady.

"Why, what else can you call them?" said the Expert. "They are got up to look like extracts from newspapers. But they were printed as they are, and were never in any journal. Shall I tell you how I found that out?"

"If you please, sir," said Helen.

"Well, then, I looked at the reverse side, and I found seven misprints in one slip, and five in the

other. That was a great number to creep into printed slips of that length. The trial part did not show a single erratum. 'Hullo!' said I to myself; 'why, one side is printed more carefully than the other.' And that was not natural. The printing of advertisements is looked after quite as sharply as any other part in a journal. Why, the advertisers themselves cry out if they are misprinted!"

"O, how shrewd!" cried Helen.

"Child's play," said the Expert. "Well, from that blot I went on. I looked at the edges, and they were cut too clean. A gentleman with a pair of scissors can't cut slips out of a paper like this. They were cut in the printer's office. Lastly, on holding them to the light, I found they had not been machined upon the plan now adopted by all newspapers, but worked by hand. In one word — forgeries!"

"Oh!" said Helen, "to think I should have handled forgeries, and shown them to you for real. Ah! I'm so glad; for now I have committed the same crime as Robert Penfold; I have uttered a forged document. Take me up, and have me put in prison, for I am as guilty as ever he was." Her face shone with rapture at sharing Robert's guilt.

The Expert was a little puzzled by sentiments so high-flown and unpractical.

"I think," said he, "you are hardly aware what a valuable discovery this may prove to you. However, the next step is to get me a specimen of the person's handwriting who furnished you with these. The chances are, he is the writer of the forged note."

Helen uttered an exclamation that was almost a scream. The inference took her quite by surprise. She looked at Mrs. Undercliff.

"He is right, I think," said the old lady.

"Right or wrong," said the Expert, "the next step in the inquiry is to do what I said. But that demands great caution. You must write a short civil note to Mr. Hand, and just ask him some question. Let me see: ask him what newspapers his extracts are from, and whether he has got any more. He will not tell you the truth; but no matter, we shall get hold of his handwriting."

"But, sir," said Helen, "there is no need for that. Mr. Hand sent me a note along with the extracts."

"The deuce he did. All the better. Any words in it that are in the forged note? Is Penfold in it, or Wardlaw?"

Helen reflected a moment, and then said she thought both those names were in it.

"Fetch me that note," said Undercliff, and his eyes sparkled. He was on a hot scent now.

"And let me study the genuine reports, and compare what they say with the forged ones," said Mrs. Undercliff.

"O, what friends I have found at last!" cried Helen.

She thanked them both warmly, and hurried home, for it was getting late.

Next day she brought Hand's letter to Mr. Undercliff, and devoured his countenance while he inspected it keenly, and compared it with the forged note.

The comparison was long and careful, but unsatisfactory. Mr. Undercliff could not conscientiously say whether Hand had written the forged note or not. There were *pros* and *cons*.

"We are in deeper water than I thought," said he. "The comparison must be enlarged. You must write as I suggested, and get another note out of Mr. Hand."

"And leave the prayer-book with me," said Mrs. Undercliff.

Helen complied with these instructions, and a due course received a civil line from Mr. Hand, saying that the extracts had been sent him from his country by one of his fellow-clerks, and he had locked them up, lest Mr. Michael Penfold, who was much respected in the office, should see them. He could not say where they came from; perhaps from some provincial paper. If of any value to Mr. Rolleston, she was quite at liberty to keep them. He added there was a coffee-house in the city where she could read all the London papers of that date. This letter, which contained a great many new words than the other, was submitted to Undercliff. It puzzled him so that he set to work, and dissected every curve the writer's pen had made; but it could come to no positive conclusion, and he refused to utter his conjectures.

"We are in a deep water," said he.

Finally, he told his mother he was at a standstill for the present.

"But I am not," said Mrs. Undercliff. She added, after a while, "I think there's felony at the bottom of this."

"Smells like it to me," said the Expert.

"Then I want you to do something very clever for me."

"What is that?"

"I want you to forge something."

"Come! I say."

"Quite innocent, I assure you."

"Well, but it is a bad habit to commence."

"All depends on the object. This is to take me forger, that is all."

The Expert's eyes sparkled. He had always been sadly discontented with the efforts of forgers, and thought he could do better.

"I'll do it," said he, gayly.

CHAPTER LXI.

GENERAL ROLLESTON and his daughter sat at breakfast in the hotel. General Rolleston was reading the *Times*, and his eye lighted on something that made him start. He looked towards Helen, and his first impulse was to communicate it to her; but, on second thoughts, he preferred to put a question to her first.

"You have never told the Wardlaws what those sailors said?"

"No, papa. I still think they ought to have been told; but you know you positively forbade me."

"Of course I did. Why afflict the old gentleman with such a tale? A couple of common sailors! who chose to fancy the ship was destroyed."

"Who are better judges of such a thing than sailors?"

"Well, my child, if you think so, I can't help it. All I say is, spare the old gentleman such a report. As for Arthur, to tell you the truth, I have mentioned the matter to him."

"O papa! Then why forbid me to tell him? What did he say?"

"He was very much distressed. 'Destroy the ship my Helen was in,' said he: 'if I thought Wylie had done that I'd kill him with my own hand, though I was hanged for it next minute.' I never saw the young fellow fire up so before. But when he came to think calmly over it a little while, he

said: "I hope this slander will never reach my father's ears; it would grieve him deeply. I only laugh at it."

"Laugh at it! and yet talk of killing?"

"O, people say they laugh at a thing when they are very angry all the time. However, as you are a good girl, and mind what you are told, I'll read you an advertisement that will make you stare. Here is Joseph Wylie, who, you say, wrecked the Proserpine, actually invited by Michael Penfold to call on him, and hear of something to his advantage."

"Dear me!" said Helen, "how strange! Surely Mr. Penfold cannot know the character of that man. Stop a minute! Advertise for him? Then nobody knows where he lives? There, papa: you see he is afraid to go near Arthur Wardlaw; he knows he destroyed the ship. What a mystery it all is! And so Mr. Penfold is at home, after all; and not to send me a single line. I never met with so much unkindness and discourtesy in all my life."

"Ah, my dear," said the General, "you never defied the world before, as you are doing now."

Helen sighed; but, presently recovering her spirit, said she had done without the world on her dear island, and she would not be its slave now.

As she was always as good as her word, she declined an invitation to play the lion, and, dressing herself in plain merino, went down that very evening to Michael Penfold's cottage.

We run thither a little before her, to relate briefly what had taken place there.

Nancy Rouse, as may well be imagined, was not the woman to burn two thousand pounds. She locked the notes up; and after that night became very reserved on that head, so much so that, at last, Mr. Penfold saw it was an interdicted topic, and dropped it in much wonder.

When Nancy came to think of it in daylight, she could not help suspecting Wylie had some hand in it; and it occurred to her that the old gentleman, who lodged next door, might be an agent of Wylie's, and a spy on her. Wylie must have told him to push the £2,000 into her room; but what a strange thing to do! To be sure, he was a sailor, and sailors had been known to make sandwiches of bank-notes and eat them. Still, her good sense revolted against this theory, and she was sore puzzled; for, after all, there was the money, and she had seen it come through the wall. One thing appeared certain, Joe had not forgotten her; he was thinking of her as much as ever, or more than ever; so her spirits rose, she began singing and whistling again, and waited cunningly till Joe should reappear and explain his conduct. Hostage for his reappearance she held the £2,000. She felt so strong and saucy she was half sorry she had allowed Mr. Penfold to advertise; but, after all, it did not much matter; she could always declare to Joe she had never missed him, for her part, and the advertising was a folly of poor Mr. Penfold's.

Matters were in this condition when the little servant came up one evening to Mr. Penfold and said there was a young lady to see him.

"A young lady for me?" said he.

"Which she won't eat you, while I am by," said the sharp little girl. "It is a lady, and the same what come before."

"Perhaps she will oblige me with her name," said Michael, timidly.

"I won't show her up till she do," said this mite

of a servant, who had been scolded by Nancy for not extracting that information on Helen's last visit.

"Of course, I must receive her," said Michael, half consulting the mite; it belonged to a sex which promptly assumes the control of such gentle creatures as he was.

"Is Miss Rouse in the way?" said he.

The mite laughed, and said:—

"She is only gone down the street. I'll send her in to take care on you."

With this she went off, and in due course led Helen up the stairs. She ran in, and whispered in Michael's ear,—

"It is Miss Helen Rolleston."

Thus they announced a lady at No. 3.

Michael stared with wonder at so great a personage visiting him; and the next moment Helen glided into the room, blushing a little, and even panting inaudibly, but all on her guard. She saw before her a rather stately figure, and a face truly venerable, benignant, and beautiful, though deficient in strength. She cast a devouring glance on him as she courtesied to him; and it instantly flashed across her, "But for you there would be no Robert Penfold." There was an unconscious tenderness in her voice as she spoke to him, for she had to open the interview.

"Mr. Penfold, I fear my visit may surprise you, as you did not write to me. But, when you hear what I am come about, I think you will not be displeased with me for coming."

"Displeased, madam! I am highly honored by your visit,—a lady who, I understand, is to be married to my worthy employer, Mr. Arthur. Pray be seated, madam."

"Thank you, sir."

Helen began in a low, thrilling voice, to which, however, she gave firmness by a resolute effort of her will.

"I am come to speak to you of one who is very dear to you, and to all who really know him."

"Dear to me? It is my son. The rest are gone. It is Robert."

And he began to tremble.

"Yes, it is Robert," said she, very softly; then turning her eyes away from him, lest his emotion should overcome her, she said,—

"He has laid me and my father under deep obligations."

She dragged her father in; for it was essential not to show Mr. Penfold she was in love with Robert.

"Obligations to my Robert? Ah, madam, it is very kind of you to say that, and cheer a desolate father's heart with praise of his lost son! But how could a poor unfortunate man in his position serve a lady like you?"

"He defended me against robbers, single-handed."

"Ah," said the old man, glowing with pride, and looking more beautiful than ever, "he was always as brave as a lion."

"That is nothing; he saved my life again, and again, and again."

"God bless him for it! and God bless you for coming and telling me of it! O madam, he was always brave, and gentle, and just, and good; so noble, so unfortunate."

And the old man began to cry.

Helen's bosom heaved, and it cost her a struggle not to throw her arms around the

man's neck and cry with him. But she came prepared for a sore trial of her feelings, and she clenched her hands and teeth, and would not give way an inch.

"Tell me how he saved your life, madam."

"He was in the ship, and in the boat, with me."

"Ah, madam," said Michael, "that must have been some other Robert Penfold; not my son. He could not come home. His time was not up, you know."

"It was Robert Penfold, son of Michael Penfold."

"Excuse me a moment," said Michael; and he went to a drawer, and brought her a photograph of Robert. "Was it this Robert Penfold?"

The girl took the photograph, and eyed it, and lowered her head over it.

"Yes," she murmured.

"And he was coming home in the ship with you. Is he mad? More trouble! more trouble!"

"Do not alarm yourself," said Helen; "he will not land in England for years,"—here she stifled a sob,— "and long ere that we shall have restored him to society."

Michael stared at that, and shook his head.

"Never," said he; "that is impossible."

"Why impossible?"

"They all say he is a felon."

"They all *shall* say that he is a martyr."

"And so he is; but how can that ever be proved?"

"I don't know. But I am sure the truth can always be proved, if people have patience and perseverance."

"My sweet young lady," said Michael, sadly, "you don't know the world."

"I am learning it fast, though. It may take me a few years, perhaps, to make powerful friends, to grope my way amongst forgers, and spies, and wicked, dishonest people of all sorts, but so surely as you sit there I'll clear Robert Penfold before I die."

The good feeble old man gazed on her with admiration and astonishment.

She subdued her flashing eye, and said with a smile, "And you shall help me. Mr. Penfold, let me ask you a question. I called here before; but you were gone to Edinburgh. Then I wrote to you at the office, begging you to let me know the moment you returned. Now, do not think I am angry; but pray tell me why you would not answer my letter."

Michael Penfold was not burdened with *amour propre*, but who has not got a little of it in some corner of his heart? "Miss Rolleston," said he, "I was born a gentleman, and was a man of fortune once, till false friends ruined me. I am in business now, but still a gentleman; and neither as a gentleman nor as a man of business could I leave a lady's letter unanswered. I never did such a thing in all my life. I never got your letter," he said, quite put out; and his wrath was so like a dove's that Helen smiled and said, "But I posted it myself. And my address was in it; yet it was not returned."

"Well, madam, it was not delivered, I assure you."

"It was intercepted, then."

He looked at her. She blushed, and said, "Yes, I am getting suspicious, ever since I found I was followed and watched. Excuse me a moment."

She went to the window and peered through the curtains. She saw a man walking slowly by; it quickened his pace the moment she opened the curtain.

"Yes," said she, "it was intercepted, and I watched wherever I go."

Before she could say any more a bustle was heard on the stairs, and in bounced Nancy Rouse, like as she came. "Excuse me, Mr. Penfold, but I can't wait no longer with my heart a bursting: is! it is! O my dear, sweet young lady; the lady be praised! You really are here alive and well. Kiss you I must and shall; come back from a dead; there—there—there!"

"Nancy! my good, kind Nancy," cried Helen, and returned her embrace warmly.

Then followed a burst of broken explanation, and at last Helen made out that Nancy was a landlady, and had left Lambeth long ago.

"But, dear heart!" said she, "Mr. Penfold is properly jealous of you. To think of her coming here to see you, and not me!"

"But I did not know you were here, Nancy. Then followed a stream of inquiries, and a warm-hearted sympathy with all her dangers and troubles, that Helen was led into revealing the cause of it all.

"Nancy," said she, solemnly, "the ship was fully cast away; there was a villain on board that made holes in her on purpose, and sank her."

Nancy lifted up her hands in astonishment. But Mr. Penfold was far more surprised and agitated.

"For Heaven's sake, don't say that!" he cried.

"Why not, sir?" said Helen; "it is the truth, and I have got the testimony of dying men to prove it."

"I am sorry for it. Pray, don't let anybody know. Why, Wardlaw's would lose the insurance of £150,000."

"Arthur Wardlaw knows it: my father told him."

"And he never told me," said Penfold, with growing surprise.

"Goodness me! what a world it is!" cried Nancy.

"Why, that was murder, and no less. It is a wonder she wasn't drowned, and another friend into the bargain that I had in that very ship. O, I wish I had the villain here that done it, I'd tear his eyes out!"

Here the mite of a servant bounded in, radiant and giggling, gave Nancy a triumphant glance, and popped out again, holding the door open, through which in slouched a seafaring man, drawn by Penfold's advertisement, and decoyed into Nancy's presence by the imp of a girl, who thought to please her mistress.

Nancy, who for some days had secretly expected this visit, merely gave a little squeak; but Helen uttered a violent scream; and, upon that, Wylie recognized her, and literally staggered back a step or two, and these words fell out of his mouth:—

"The sick girl!"

Helen caught them.

"Ay!" cried she; "but she is alive in spite of you: alive to denounce you and to punish you."

She darted forward, and her eyes flashed lightning.

"Look at this man, all of you," she cried.

"Look at him well: THIS IS THE WRETCH THAT SCUTTLED THE PROSERPINE!"

CHAPTER LXI.

"O Miss HELEN, how can you say that?" cried Nancy, in utter dismay. "I'll lay my life poor Joe never did no such wickedness."

But Helen waved her off without looking at her, and pointed at Wylie.

"Are you blind? Why does he cringe and cower at sight of me? I tell you he scuttled the *Proserpine*, and the great augur he did it with I have seen and handled. Yes, sir, you destroyed a ship, and the lives of many innocent persons, whose blood now cries to Heaven against you; and if I am alive to tell the cruel tale, it is no thanks to you; for you did your best to kill me, and, what is worse, to kill Robert Penfold, this gentleman's son; for he was on board the ship. You are no better than an assassin."

"I am a man that's down," said Wylie, in a low and broken voice, hanging his head. "Don't bite any more. I did n't mean to take anybody's life: I took my chance with the rest, lady, as I'm a man. I have lain in my bed many's the night, crying like a child, with thinking you were dead. And now I am glad you are alive to be revenged on me. Well, you see, it is your turn now; you have lost me my sweetheart, there; she'll never speak to me again, after this. Ah, the poor man gets all the blame! You don't ask who tempted me; and, if I was to tell you, you'd hate me worse than ever; so I'll belay. If I'm a sinner, I'm a sufferer. England's too hot to hold me. I've only to go to sea, and get drowned the quickest way." And with this he vented a deep sigh, and slouched out of the room.

Nancy sank into a seat, and threw her apron over her head, and rocked and sobbed as if her heart would break.

As for Helen Rolleston, she still stood in the middle of the room, burning with excitement.

Then poor old Michael came to her, and said, almost in a whisper,—

"It is a bad business; he is her sweetheart, and she had the highest opinion of him."

This softened Helen in a great measure. She turned and looked at Nancy, and said,—

"O dear, what a miserable thing! But I could n't know that."

After a while, she drew a chair, and sat down by Nancy, and said,—

"I won't punish him, Nancy."

Nancy burst out sobbing afresh.

"You have punished him," said she, bruskiy, "and me too, as never did you no harm. You have driven him out of the country, you have."

At this piece of feminine justice Helen's anger revived. "So, then," said she, "ships are to be destroyed, and ladies and gentlemen murdered, and nobody is to complain, or say an angry word, if the wretch happens to be paying his addresses to you. That makes up for all the crimes in the world. What! Can an honest woman like you lose all sense of right and wrong for a man? And such a man!"

"Why, he is as well-made a fellow as ever I saw," sobbed Nancy.

"O, is he?" said Helen, ironically,—her views of manly beauty were different, and black eyes a *sine qua non* with her,—"then it is a pity his soul is not made to correspond. I hope by my next visit you will have learned to despise him as you ought. Why, if I loved a man ever so, I'd tear him out of

my heart if he committed a crime; ay, though I tore my soul out of my body to do it."

"No, you would n't," said Nancy, recovering some of her natural pugnacity; "for we are all tarred with the same stick, gentle or simple."

"But I assure you I would," cried Helen; "and so ought you."

"Well, miss, you begin," cried Nancy, suddenly firing up through her tears. "If the *Proserpine* was scuttled, which I've your word for it, Miss Helen, and I never knew you tell a lie, why, your sweet-heart is more to blame for it than mine."

Helen rose with dignity.

"You are in grief," said she. "I leave you to consider whether you have done well to affront me in your own house." And she was moving to the door with great dignity, when Nancy ran and stopped her.

"O, don't leave me so, Miss Helen," she cried; "don't you go to quarrel with me for speaking the truth too plain and rude, as is a plain-spoken body at the best; and in such grief myself, I scarce know what I do say. But indeed, and in truth, you must n't go and put it abroad that the ship was scuttled; if you do, you won't hurt Joe Wylie; he'll get a ship, and fly the country. Who you'll hurt will be your own husband as is to be,—Wardlaws."

"Shall I, Mr. Penfold?" asked Helen, disdainfully.

"Well, madam, certainly it might create some unworthy suspicion."

"Suspicion?" cried Nancy. "Don't you think to throw dust in my eyes. What had poor Joe to gain by destroying that there ship? you know very well he was bribed to do it; and risk his own life. And who bribed him? Who should bribe him, but the man as owned the ship?"

"Miss Rouse," said Mr. Penfold, "I sympathize with your grief, and make great allowance; but I will not sit here and hear my worthy employers blackened with such terrible insinuations. The great house of Wardlaw bribe a sailor to scuttle their own ship, with Miss Rolleston and one hundred and sixty thousand pounds' worth of gold on board! Monstrous! monstrous!"

"Then what did Joe Wylie mean?" replied Nancy. "Says he, 'The poor man gets all the blame. If I was to tell you who tempted me,' says he, 'you'd hate me worse.' Then I say, why should she hate him worse? Because it's her sweetheart tempted mine. I stands to that."

This inference, thus worded, struck Helen as so droll that she turned her head aside to giggle a little. But old Penfold replied loftily,—

"Who cares what a Wylie says against a great old mercantile house of London City?"

"Very well, Mr. Penfold," said Nancy, with one great final sob, and dried her eyes with her apron; and she did it with such an air, they both saw she was not going to shed another tear about the matter. "Very well; you are both against me; then I'll say no more. But I know what I know."

"And what do you know?" inquired Helen.

"Time will show," said Nancy, turning suddenly very dogged,—*"time will show."*

Nothing more was to be got out of her after that; and Helen, soon after, made her a civil, though stiff, little speech; regretted the pain she had inadvertently caused her, and went away, after leaving Mr. Penfold her address.

On her return home, she entered the whole ad-

venture in her diary. She made a separate entry to this effect:—

Mysterious.—My letter to Mr. Penfold at the office intercepted.

Wylie hints that he was bribed by Messrs. Wardlaw.

Nancy Rouse suspects that it was Arthur, and says time will show.

As for me, I can neither see why Wylie should scuttle the ship unless he was bribed by somebody, nor what Arthur or his father could gain by destroying that ship. This is all as dark as is that more cruel mystery which alone I care to solve.

CHAPTER LXIII

NEXT morning, after a sleepless night, Nancy Rouse said to Mr. Penfold, "Have n't I heard you say as bank-notes could be traced to folk?"

"Certainly, madam," said Michael: "but it is necessary to take the numbers of them."

"Oh! And how do you do that?"

"Why, every note has its own number."

"La! ye don't say so; then them fifties are all numbered, belike."

"Certainly, and if you wish me to take down the numbers, I will do so."

"Well, sir, some other day you shall. I could not bear the sight of them just yet; for it is them as has been the ruin of poor Joe Wylie, I do think."

Michael could not follow this; but, the question having been raised, he advised her, on grounds of common prudence, not to keep them in the house without taking down their numbers.

"We will talk about that in the evening," said Nancy.

Accordingly, at night, Nancy produced the notes, and Michael took down the numbers and descriptions in his pocket-book. They ran from 16,444 to 16,463. And he promised her to try and ascertain through what hands they had passed. He said he had a friend in the Bank of England, who might perhaps be able to discover to what private bank they had been issued in the first instance, and then those bankers, on a strong representation, might perhaps examine their books, and say to whom they had paid them. He told her the notes were quite new, and evidently had not been separated since their first issue.

Nancy caught a glimpse of his meaning, and set herself doggedly to watch until the person who had passed the notes through the chimney should come for them. "He will miss them," said she, "you mark my words."

Thus Helen, though reduced to a stand-still herself, had set an inquiry on foot which was alive and ramifying.

In the course of a few days she received a visit from Mrs. Undercliff. That lady came in, and laid a prayer-book on the table, saying, "I have brought it you back, miss; and I want you to do something for my satisfaction."

"O, certainly," said Helen. "What is it?"

"Well, miss, first examine the book and the writing. Is it all right?"

Helen examined it, and said it was: "Indeed," said she, "the binding looks fresher, if anything."

"You have a good eye," said Mrs. Undercliff.

"Well, what I want you to do is—of course, Mr. Wardlaw is a good deal about you?"

"Yes."

"Does he go to church with you ever?"

"No."

"But he would, if you were to ask him."

"I have no doubt he would; but why?"

"Manage matters so that he shall go to church with you, and then put the book down for him to see the writing, all in a moment. Watch his eyes and tell me."

Helen colored up and said, "No; I can't do it. Why, it would be turning God's temple into a market-place. Besides—"

"The real reason first, if you please," said a horribly shrewd old woman.

"Well, Mr. Arthur Wardlaw is the gentleman am going to marry."

"Good Heavens!" cried Mrs. Undercliff, then utterly aback by this most unexpected turn. "Why, you never told me that!"

"No," said Helen, blushing. "I did not think necessary to go into that. Well, of course, it is in human nature that Mr. Wardlaw should be anxious in my good work, or put himself forward; but he has never refused to lend me any help that is in his power; and it is repugnant to my nature to suspect him of a harm, and to my feelings to let a trap for him."

"Quite right," said Mrs. Undercliff; "of course I had no idea you were going to marry Mr. Wardlaw. I made sure Mr. Penfold was the man."

Helen blushed higher still, but made no reply.

Mrs. Undercliff turned the conversation directly. "My son has given many hours to Mr. Hand's letters, and he told me to tell you he is beginning to doubt whether Mr. Hand is a real person, with a real handwriting, at all."

"O Mrs. Undercliff! Why, he wrote me two letters! However, I will ask Mr. Penfold whether Mr. Hand exists or not. When shall I have the pleasure of seeing you again?"

"Whenever you like, my dear young lady; but not upon this business of Penfold and Wardlaw. I have done with it forever; and my advice to you, miss, is not to stir the mud any more." And with these mysterious words the old lady retired, leaving Helen deeply discouraged at her desertion.

However she noted down the conversation in her diary, and made this comment: People find no pleasure in proving an accused person innocent; the charm is to detect guilt. This day a good, kind friend abandons me because I will not turn aside from my charitable mission to suspect another person as wrongfully as he I love has been suspected.

Mem: To see, or make inquiries about, Mr. Hand.

General Rolleston had taken a furnished house in Hanover Square. He now moved into it, and Helen was compelled to busy herself in household arrangements.

She made the house charming; but unfortunately stood in a draught whilst heated, and caught a chill, which a year ago would very likely have gone to her lungs and killed her, but now settled on her limbs in violent neuralgic pains, and confined her to her bed for a fortnight.

She suffered severely, but had the consolation of finding she was tenderly beloved. Arthur sent flowers every day, and affectionate notes twice a day. And her father was constantly by her bedside.

At last she came down to the drawing-room, but

y on the sofa, well wrapped up, and received only her most intimate friends. The neuralgia had now settled on her right arm and hand, so that she could not write a letter; and she said to herself with a sigh, "O, how unfit a girl is to do anything great! We always fall ill just when health and strength are most needed."

Nevertheless, during this period of illness and inaction, circumstances occurred that gave her joy.

Old Wardlaw had long been exerting himself in influential channels to obtain what he called justice for his friend Rolleston, and had received some very encouraging promises; for the General's services were indisputable; and, while he was stirring the matter, Helen was unconsciously co-operating by her beauty, and the noise her adventure made in society. At last a gentleman, whose wife was about as queen, promised old Wardlaw one day, that, if a fair opportunity should occur, that lady should tell Helen's adventure, and how the gallant old General, when everybody else despaired, had gone out to the Pacific, and found his daughter, and brought her home. This lady was a courtesan of ten years' standing, and waited her opportunity; but when it did come, she took it, and she soon found that no great act or skill was necessary on such an occasion as this. She was listened to with ready sympathy, and the very next day some inquiries were made, the result of which was that the Horse Guards offered Lieutenant-General Rolleston the command of a crack regiment and a full generalship. At the same time, it was intimated to him from another official quarter, that a baronetcy was at his service, if he felt disposed to accept it. The tears came into the stout old warrior's eyes at this sudden sunshine of royal favor, and Helen kissed old Wardlaw of her own accord; and the star of the Wardlaws rose into the ascendant, and for a time Robert Penfold seemed to be quite forgotten.

The very day General Rolleston became Sir Edward, a man and a woman called at the Charing Cross Hotel, and asked for Miss Helen Rolleston.

The answer was, she had left the hotel about ten days.

"Where is she gone, if you please?"

"We don't know."

"Why, has n't she left her new address?"

"No. The footman came for letters several times."

No information was to be got here, and Mr. Penfold and Nancy Rouse went home greatly disappointed, and puzzled what to do.

At first sight it might appear easy for Mr. Penfold to learn the new address of Miss Rolleston. He had only to ask Arthur Wardlaw. But, to tell the truth, during the last fortnight Nancy Rouse had impressed her views steadily and persistently on his mind, and he had also made a discovery that co-operated with her influence and arguments to undermine his confidence in his employer. What that discovery was we must leave him to relate.

Looking, then, at matters with a less unsuspicious eye than heretofore, he could not help observing that Arthur Wardlaw never put into the office letter-box a single letter for his sweetheart. He must write to her, thought Michael: but I am not to know her address. Suppose, after all, he did intercept that letter.

And now, like other simple, credulous men whose confidence has been shaken, he was literally brimful

of suspicions, some of them reasonable, some of them rather absurd.

He had too little art to conceal his change of mind; and so, very soon after his vain attempt to see Helen Rolleston at the inn, he was bundled off to Scotland on business of the office.

Nancy missed him sorely. She felt quite alone in the world. She managed to get through the day, — work helped her; but at night she sat disconsolate and bewildered, and she was now beginning to doubt her own theory. For certainly, if all that money had been Joe Wylie's, he would hardly have left the country without it.

Now, the second evening after Michael's departure, she was seated in his room, brooding, when suddenly she heard a peculiar knocking next door.

She listened a little while, and then stole softly down stairs to her own little room.

Her suspicions were correct. It was the same sort of knocking that had preceded the phenomenon of the hand and bank-notes. She peeped into the kitchen and whispered, "Jenny — Polly — come here."

A stout washerwoman and the mite of a servant came, wondering.

"Now you stand there," said Nancy, "and do as I bid you. Hold your tongues, now. I know all about it."

The myrmidons stood silent, but with panting bosoms; for the mysterious knocking now concluded, and a brick in the chimney began to move.

It came out, and immediately a hand with a ring on it came through the aperture, and felt about.

The mite stood firm, but the big washerwoman gave signs of agitation that promised to end in a scream.

Nancy put her hand roughly before the woman's mouth. "Hold your tongue, ye great soft —" And, without finishing her sentence, she darted to the chimney and seized the hand with both her own and pulled it with such violence that the wrist followed it through the masonry, and a roar was heard.

"Hold on to my waist, Polly," she cried. "Jenny, take the poker, and that string, and tie his hand to it while we hold on. Quick! quick! Are ye asleep?"

Thus adjured, the mite got the poker against the wall, and tried to tie the wrist to it.

This, however, was not easy, the hand struggled so desperately.

However, pulling is a matter of weight rather than muscle: and the weight of the two women pulling downwards overpowered the violent struggles of the man; and the mite contrived to tie the poker to the wrist, and repeat the ligatures a dozen times in a figure of eight.

Then the owner of the hand, who had hitherto shown violent strength, taken at a disadvantage, now showed intelligence. Convinced that skill as well as force were against him, he ceased to struggle, and became quite quiet.

The women contemplated their feat with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes.

When they had feasted a reasonable time on the imprisoned hand, and two of them, true to their sex, had scrutinized a green stone upon one of the fingers, to see whether it was real or false, Nancy took them by the shoulders, and bundled them good-humoredly out of the room.

She then lowered the gas and came out, and

locked the room up, and put the key in her pocket.

"I'll have my supper with you," said she. "Come, Jenny, I'm cook; and you make the kitchen as a body could eat off it, for I expect visitors."

"La, ma'am," said the mite; "he can't get out of the chimney to visit us through the street door."

"No, girl," said Nancy. "But he can send a hambassador; so Show her heyes and plague her art, as the play says, for of all the dirty kitchens give me hers. I never was there but once, and my slipper come off for the muck, a sticking to a body like bird-lime."

There was a knock at Nancy's street door; the little servant, full of curiosity, was for running to it on the instant. But Nancy checked her.

"Take your time," said she. "It is only a lodging-house keeper."

CHAPTER LXIV.

SIR EDWARD ROLLESTON could not but feel his obligations to the Wardlaws, and, when his daughter got better, he spoke warmly on the subject, and asked her to consider seriously whether she had not tried Arthur's affection sufficiently.

"He does not complain to you, I know," said he; "but he feels it very hard that you should punish him for an act of injustice that has already so deeply afflicted him. He says he believes some fool or villain heard him say that two thousand pounds was to be borrowed between them, and went and imposed on Robert Penfold's credulity; meaning, perhaps, to call again after the note had been cashed, and get Arthur's share of the money."

"But why did he not come forward?"

"He declares he did not know when the trial was till a month after: and his father bears him out; says he was actually delirious, and his life in danger. I myself can testify that he was cut down just in this way, when he heard the Proserpine was lost, and you on board her. Why not give him credit for the same genuine distress at young Penfold's misfortune? Come, Helen, is it fair to afflict and punish this gentleman for the misfortune of another, whom he never speaks of but with affection and pity? He says that if you would marry him at once, he thinks he should feel strong enough to throw himself into the case with you, and would spare neither money nor labor to clear Robert Penfold; but, as it is, he says he feels so wretched, and so tortured with jealousy, that he can't co-operate warmly with you, though his conscience reproaches him every day. Poor young man! His is really a very hard case. For you promised him your hand before you ever saw Robert Penfold."

"I did," said Helen; "but I did not say when. Let me have one year to my good work, before I devote my whole life to Arthur."

"Well, it will be a year wasted. Why postpone your marriage for that?"

"I promised."

"Yes, but he chose to fancy young Wardlaw is his enemy. You might relax that, now he tells you he will co-operate with you as your husband. Now, Helen, tell the truth,—is it a woman's work? Have you found it so? Will not Arthur do it better than you?"

Helen, weakened already by days of weeping, began to cry, and say, "What shall I do? what shall I do?"

"If you have any doubt, my dear," said Edward, "then think of what I owe to these *W* laws."

And, with that he kissed her, and left his tears; and, soon after, sent Arthur himself to plead his own cause.

It was a fine summer afternoon; the long iron casements, looking on the garden of the *Sun*, were open, and the balmy air came in and wet the beautiful girl's cheek, and just stirred her at times.

Arthur Wardlaw came softly in, and gazed at her as she lay; her loveliness filled his heart and soul; he came and knelt by her sofa, and took in hand, and kissed it, and his own eyes glistened with tenderness.

He had one thing in his favor. He loved her. Her knowledge of this had more than befriended him, and made her refuse to suspect of any great ill; it befriended him now. She had a look of angelic pity on him.

"Poor Arthur!" she said. "You and I are unhappy."

"But we shall be happy, ere long, I hope," said Arthur.

Helen shook her head.

Then he patted her, and coaxed her, and said it would be her servant, as well as a husband, and in wish of her heart should go ungratified.

"None?" said she, fixing her eyes on him.

"Not one," said he; "upon my honor."

Then he was so soft and persuasive, and alluded so delicately to her plighted faith, that she felt like a poor bird caught in a silken net.

"Sir Edward is very good," said he; "he feels for me."

At that moment, a note was sent up.

"Mr. Wardlaw is here, and has asked me when the marriage is to be. I can't tell him; I look like a fool."

Helen sighed deeply and had begun to gather those tears that weaken a woman. She glanced despairingly to and fro: and saw no escape. Then, Heaven knows why or wherefore, — probably with no clear design at all but a woman's weak desire to cause a momentary diversion, to put off the inevitable for five minutes, — she said to Arthur: "Please give me that prayer-book. Thank you. It is right you should know this." And she put Cooper's deposition, and Welch's, into his hands.

He devoured them, and started up in great indignation. "It is an abominable slander," said he. "We have lost ten thousand pounds by the wreck of that ship, and Wylie's life was saved by a miracle as well as your own. It is a foul slander. I hurl it from me." And he made his words good by whirling the prayer-book out of window.

Helen uttered a scream. "My mother's prayer-book!" she cried.

"Oh! I beg pardon," said he.

"As well you may," said she. "Run and send George after it."

"No, I'll go myself," said he. "Pray forgive me: you don't know what a terrible slander they have desecrated your prayer-book with."

He ran out, and was a long time gone. He came back at last, looking terrified.

"I can't find it," said he. "somebody has carried it off. O, how unfortunate I am!"

"Not find it," said Helen. "But it *must* be found."

"Of course it must be found," said Arthur. "A pretty scandal to go into the hands of Heaven knows who. I shall offer twenty guineas reward for it at once. I'll go down to the *Times* this moment. Was ever anything so unlucky?"

"Yes, go at once," said Helen; "and I'll send the servants into the Square. I don't want to say anything unkind, Arthur, but you ought not to have thrown my prayer-book into the public street."

"I know I ought not. I am ashamed of it myself."

"Well, let me see the advertisement."

"You shall. I have no doubt we shall recover it."

Next morning the *Times* contained an advertisement offering twenty guineas for a prayer-book lost in Hanover Square, and valuable not in itself, but as a relic of a deceased parent.

In the afternoon, Arthur called to know if anybody had brought the prayer-book back.

Helen shook her head sadly, and said, "No."

He seemed very sorry, and so penitent, that Helen said,—

"Do not despair. And if it is gone, why, I must remember, you have forgiven me something, and I must forgive you."

The footman came in.

"If you please, miss, here is a woman wishes to speak to you; says she has brought a prayer-book."

"O, show her up at once," cried Helen.

Arthur turned away his head to hide a cynical smile. He had good reasons for thinking it was not the one he had flung out of the window yesterday.

A tall woman came in, wearing a thick veil, that concealed her features.

She entered on her business at once.

"You lost a prayer-book in this Square yesterday, madam."

"Yes."

"You offer twenty guineas reward for it."

"Yes."

"Please to look at this one."

Helen examined it, and said with joy it was hers.

Arthur was thunderstruck. He could not believe his senses.

"Let me look at it," said he.

His eyes went at once to the writing. He turned as pale as death, and stood petrified.

The woman took the prayer-book out of his unresisting hand, and said,—

"You'll excuse me, sir; but it is a large reward, and gentlefolks sometimes go from their word when the article is found."

Helen, who was delighted at getting back her book, and rather tickled at Arthur having to pay twenty guineas for losing it, burst out laughing, and said,

"Give her the reward, Arthur; I am not going to pay for your misdeeds."

"With all my heart," said Arthur, struggling for composure.

He sat down to draw a check.

"What name shall I put?"

"Hum! Edith Heskett."

"Two t's?"

"No, only one."

"There"

"Thank you, sir."

She put the check into her purse, and brought the prayer-book to Helen.

"Lock it up at once," said she, in a voice so low that Arthur heard her murmur, but not the words; and she retired, leaving Helen staring with amazement, and Arthur in a cold perspiration.

CHAPTER LXV.

WHEN the Springbok weighed anchor and left the island, a solitary form was seen on Telegraph Hill.

When she passed eastward, out of sight of that point, a solitary figure was seen on the cliffs.

When her course brought the island dead astern of her, a solitary figure stood on the east bluff of the island, and was the last object seen from the boat as she left those waters forever.

What words can tell the sickening sorrow and utter desolation that possessed that yearning bosom!

When the boat that had carried Helen away was out of sight, he came back with uneven steps to the cave, and looked at all the familiar objects with stony eyes, and scarce recognized them, for the sunshine of her presence was there no more. He wandered to and fro in a heavy stupor, broken every now and then by sharp pangs of agony that almost made him scream. And so the poor bereaved creature wandered about all day. He could not eat, he could not sleep, his misery was more than he could bear. One day of desolation succeeded another. And what men say so hastily was true for once, "His life was a burden." He dragged it about with him he scarce knew how.

He began to hate all the things he had loved whilst she was there. The beautiful cave, all glorious with pearl, that he had made for her, he could not enter it, the sight killed him, and she not there.

He left Paradise Bay altogether at last, and anchored his boat in a nook of Seal Bay. And there he slept in general. But sometimes he would lie down, wherever he happened to be, and sleep as long as he could.

To him to wake was a calamity. And, when he did wake, it was always with a dire sense of reviving misery, and a deep sigh at the dark day he knew awaited him.

His flesh wasted on his bones, and his clothes hung loosely about him. The sorrow of the mind reduced him almost to that miserable condition in which he had landed on the island.

The dog and the seal were faithful to him; used to lie beside him, and often whimpered; their minds, accustomed to communicate without the aid of speech, found out, Heaven knows how! that he was in grief or in sickness.

These two creatures, perhaps, saved his life or his reason. They came between his bereaved heart and utter solitude.

Thus passed a month of wretchedness unspeakable.

Then his grief took a less sullen form.

He came back to Paradise Bay, and at sight of it burst into a passion of weeping.

These were his first tears, and inaugurated a grief

more tender than ever, but less akin to madness and despair.

Now he used to go about and cry her name aloud, passionately, by night and day.

"O Helen! Helen!"

And next his mind changed in one respect, and he clung to every reminiscence of her. Every morning he went round her haunts, and kissed every place where he had seen her put her hand.

Only the cave he could not yet face.

He tried, too. He went to the mouth of it again and again, and looked in; but go into it and face it, empty of her — he could not.

He prayed often.

One night he saw her in a dream.

She bent a look of angelic pity on him, and said but these words, "Live in my cave," then vanished.

Alone on an island in the vast Pacific, who can escape superstition? It fills the air. He took this communication as a command, and the next night he slept in the cave.

But he entered it in the dark, and left it before dawn.

By degrees, however, he plucked up courage and faced it in daylight. But it was a sad trial; he came out crying bitterly after a few minutes.

Still he persevered, because her image had bade him; and at last, one evening, he even lighted the lamp, and sat there looking at the glorious walls and roof his hapless love had made.

Getting stronger by degrees, he searched about, and found little relics of her, — a glove, a needle, a great hat she had made out of some large leaves. All these he wept over and cherished.

But one day he found at the very back of the cave a relic that made him start as if a viper had stung his loving heart. It was a letter.

He knew it in a moment. It had already caused him many a pang; but now it almost drove him mad. Arthur Wardlaw's letter.

He recoiled from it, and let it lie. He went out of the cave, and cursed his hard fate. But he came back. It was one of those horrible things a man abhors, yet cannot keep away from. He took it up and dashed it down with rage many times; but it all ended in his lighting the lamp at night, and torturing himself with every word of that loving letter.

And she was going home to the writer of that letter, and he was left prisoner on the island. He cursed his generous folly, and writhed in agony at the thought. He raged with jealousy, so that his very grief was blunted for a time.

He felt as if he must go mad.

Then he prayed, — prayed fervently. And at last, worn out with such fierce and contending emotions, he fell into a deep sleep, and did not wake till the sun was high in heaven.

He woke; and the first thing he saw was the fatal letter lying at his feet in a narrow stream of sunshine that came peering in.

He eyed it with horror. This was then to haunt him by night and day.

He eyed it and eyed it. Then turned his face from it; but could not help eyeing it again.

And at last certain words in this letter seemed to him to bear an affinity to another piece of writing that had also caused him a great woe. Memory by its subtle links connected these two enemies of his together. He eyed it still more keenly, and that impression became strengthened. He took the let-

ter and looked at it close, and held it at arm's length, and devoured it, and the effect of this last examination was very remarkable. It seemed to restore the man to energy and to something like hope. His eyes sparkled, and a triumphant light burst from his bosom.

He became once more a man of action. He dug and bathed, and walked rapidly to and fro upon the sands, working himself up to a daring enterprise. He took his saw into the jungle, and cut down a lot of a kind common enough there. It was wonderfully soft, and almost as light as cork. The wood this was literally useless for any other purpose than that to which Penfold destined it. He cut a great many blocks of this wood, and drilled holes in them, and, having hundreds of yards of good line, attached these quasi corks to the gunwale, so as to make a life-boat. This work took him several days, during which time an event occurred that encouraged him.

One morning he saw about a million birds very busy in the bay, and it proved to be a sperm whale come ashore.

He went out to her directly with all his tools: he wanted oil for his enterprise, and the seal oil exhausted.

When he got near the whale in his boat, he observed a harpoon sticking in the animal's side. He cut steps with his axe in the slippery carcass, and got up to it as well as he could, extracted it by cutting and pulling, and threw it down into his boat, but not till he had taken the precaution to stick a great piece of blubber on the barbed point. He then sawed and hacked under difficulties, being buffeted and bothered with thousands of birds, so eager for slices, that it was as much as he could do to avoid the making of minced fowl; but, true to his gentle creed, he contrived to get three hundred-weight of blubber without downright killing any of these greedy competitors, though he buffeted some of them, and nearly knocked out what little sense they had. He came ashore with his blubber and harpoon, and, when he came to examine the latter, he found that the name of the owner was cut deeply in the steel, — Josh. Fullalove, J. Fernandez. This inscription had a great effect on Robert Penfold's mind. It seemed to bring the island of Juan Fernandez, and humanity in general, nearer to him.

He boiled down the blubber, and put a barrel of oil on board his life-boat. He had a ship's lantern to burn it in. He also pitched her bottom as far as he could get at it, and provisioned her for a long voyage; taking care to lash the water-cask and beef-cask to the fore-thwart and foremast, in case of rough weather.

When he had done all this, it occurred to him suddenly, that, should he ever escape the winds and waves, and get to England, he would then have to encounter difficulties and dangers of another class, and lose the battle by his poverty.

"I play my last stake now," said he. "I will throw no chance away."

He reflected, with great bitterness, on the misery that want of money had already brought on him; and he vowed to reach England rich, or go to the bottom of the Pacific.

This may seem a strange vow for a man to make on an unknown island; but Robert Penfold had a powerful understanding, sharpened by adversity, and his judgment told him truly that he possessed wealth on this island, both directly and indirectly. In the first place, knowledge is sometimes wealth, and the knowledge of this island was a thing to

old sell to the American merchants on the coast of Chili; and with this view, he put on board his boat specimens of the cassia and other woods, fruit, bees, pitch, guano, pink and red coral, pearl shells, cochineal, quartz, cotton, &c., &c.

Then he took his chisel, and struck all the larger pearls off the shells that lined Helen's cave. The shells and roof yielded nine enormous pearls, thirty of the smaller ones, and a great many of the usual size.

He made a pocket inside his waistcoat to hold the pearls safe.

Then he took his spade and dug into the Spanish tip for treasure. But this was terrible work. The next day returned upon the spade and trebled his labor.

The condition to which time and long submergence had reduced this ship and cargo were truly remarkable. Nothing to be seen of the deck but a thin brown streak that mingled with the sand in patches; of the timbers nothing but the uprights, and of those the larger half eaten and dissolved.

He dug five days, and found nothing solid.

On the sixth, being now at the bottom of the ship, he struck his spade against something hard and heavy.

On inspection it looked like ore, but of what metal he could not tell; it was as black as a coal. He threw this on one side, and found nothing more; but on the next day he turned up a smaller fragment, which he took home and cleaned with lime-juice. It came out bright in places like silver.

This discovery threw light on the other. The piece of black ore, weighing about seven pounds, was in reality silver coin, that a century of submergence had reduced to the very appearance it wore before it ever went into the furnace.

He dug with fresh energy on this discovery, but found nothing more in the ship that day.

Then it occurred to him to carry off a few hundredweight of pink coral.

He got some fine specimens; and, while he was at that work, he fell in with a piece that looked very solid at the root and unnaturally heavy. On a nearer examination this proved to be a foreign substance incrustated with coral. It had twined and twisted and curled over the thing in a most unheard-of way. Robert took it home, and by rubbing here and there with lemon-juice, at last satisfied himself that this object was a silver box about the size of an octavo volume.

It had no keyhole, had evidently been soldered up for greater security, and Robert was left to conjecture how it had come there.

He connected it at once with the ship, and felt assured that some attempt had been made to save it. There it had lain by the side of the vessel all these years, but, falling clear of the sand, had been embraced by the growing coral, and was now a curiosity, if not a treasure.

He would not break the coral, but put it on board his life-boat just as it was.

And now he dug no more. He thought he could sell the galleon as well as the island, by sample, and he was impatient to be gone.

He reproached himself, a little unjustly, for allowing a woman to undertake the task of clearing him.

"To what annoyances, and perhaps affronts, have I exposed her," said he. "No, it is a man's business to defend, not to be defended."

To conclude: At high tide one fine afternoon he went on board with Ponto, and, hoisting his foresail only, crossed the bay, ranging along the island till

he reached the bluff. He got under this, and, by means of his compass and previous observations, set the boat's head exactly on the line the ducks used to take. Then he set his mainsail too, and stretched boldly out across the great Pacific Ocean.

Time seems to wear out everything, even bad luck. It ran strong against Robert Penfold for years; but, when it had struck its worst blow, and parted him and Helen Rolleston, it relaxed, and a tide of good luck set in, which, unfortunately, the broken-hearted man could not appreciate at the time. However, so it was. He wanted oil; and a whale came ashore. He wanted treasure, and the sea gave him a little back of all it had swallowed; and now he wanted fine weather; and the ocean for days and nights was like peach-colored glass, dimpled here and there; and soft westerly airs fanned him along by night and day.

To be sure, he was on the true Pacific Ocean, at a period when it is really free from storms. Still, even for that latitude, he had wonderful weather for six days, and on the seventh he fell in with a schooner, the crew of which looked over the bulwarks at him with wonder and cordiality, and, casting out a rope astern, took him in tow.

The skipper had been eyeing him with amazement for some hours through his telescope; but he was a man that had seen a great many strange things, and it was also a point of honor with him never to allow that he was astonished, or taken by surprise, or greatly moved.

"Wal, stranger," said he, "what craft is that?"

"The Helen."

"Where d'ye hail from? not that I am curious."

"From an unknown island."

"Do tell. What, another! Is it any ways nigh?"

"Not within seven hundred miles."

"Je—rusalem! Have you sailed all that in a cockle-shell?"

"Yes."

"Why, what are ye? the Wandering Jew afloat, or the Ancient Mariner? or only a kinder nauticus?"

"I'm a landsman."

"A landsman! then so is Neptune. What is your name when you are ashore?"

"Robert Penfold. The Reverend Robert Penfold."

"The Reverend— Je—rusalem!"

"May I ask what is your name, sir?"

"Wal, I reckon you may, stranger. I'm Joshua Fullalove from the States, at present located on the island of Juan Fernandez!"

"Joshua Fullalove! That is lucky. I've got something that belongs to you."

He looked about, and found the harpoon, and handed it up in a mighty straightforward simple way.

Joshua stared at him incredulously at first, but afterwards with amazement. He handled the harpoon, and inquired where Robert had fallen in with it. Robert told him.

"You're an honest man," said Fullalove, "you air. Come aboard." He was then pleased to congratulate himself on his strange luck in having drifted across an honest man in the middle of the ocean. "I've heerd," said he, "of an old chap as groped about all his life with a lantern, and could n't find one. Let's liquor."

He had some celestial mixture or other made, in-

cluding rum, mint, and snow from the Andes, and then began his interrogatories, again disclaiming curiosity at set intervals.

"Whither bound, honest man?"

"The coast of Chili."

"What for?"

"Trade."

"D'ye buy or sell? Not that it is my business."

"I wish to sell."

"What's the merchandise?"

"Knowledge, and treasure."

Fullalove scratched his head. "Ha'n't ye got a few conundrums to swap for gold dust as well?"

Robert smiled faintly: the first time this six weeks.

"I have to sell the knowledge of an island with rich products: and I have to sell the contents of a Spanish treasure-ship that I found buried in the sand of that island."

The Yankee's eyes glistened.

"Wal," said he, "I do business in islands myself. I've leased this Juan Fernandez. But of them is enough at a time. I'm monarch of a survey: but then what I survey is a mixallaneous 'lin' of Irish and Otaheitan, that it's pizen to be monarch of. And now them darned Irish has taken to converting the heathens to superstition and the worship of images, and breaks their heads if they won't: and the heathens are all smiles and sweetness and immortality. No, islands is no bait to me."

"I never asked you," said Robert. "What I do ask you is to land me at Valparaiso. There I'll find a purchaser, and will pay you handsomely for your kindness."

"That is fair," said Fullalove, dryly. "What will you pay me?"

"I'll show you," said Robert. He took out of his pocket the smaller conglomeration of Spanish coin, and put it into Fullalove's hand. "That," said he, "is silver coin I dug out of the galleon."

Fullalove inspected it keenly, and trembled slightly. Robert then went lightly over the taffrail, and slid down the low rope into his boat. He held up the black mass we have described.

"This is solid silver. I will give it you, and my best thanks, to land me at Valparaiso."

"Heave it aboard," said the Yankee.

Robert steadied himself, and hove it on board. The Yankee caught it, heavy as it was, and subjected it to some chemical test directly.

"Wal," said he, "that is a bargain. I'll land ye at Valparaiso for this. Jack, lay her head S. S. E. and by E."

Having given this order, he leaned over the taffrail and asked for more samples. Robert showed him the fruits, woods, and shells, and the pink coral, and bade him observe that the boat was ballasted with pearl oysters. He threw him up one, and a bunch of pink coral. He then shinned up the rope again, and the interrogatories recommenced. But this time he was questioned closely as to who he was, and how he came on the island? and the questions were so shrewd and penetrating that his fortitude gave way, and he cried out in anguish, "Man, man! do not torture me so. O, do not make me talk of my grief and my wrongs! they are more than I can bear."

Fullalove forbore directly, and offered him a cigar. He took it, and it soothed him a little; it was long since he had smoked one. His agitation subsided, and a quiet tear or two rolled down his haggard cheek.

The Yankee saw, and kept silence.

But when the cigar was nearly smoked out, said he was afraid Robert would not find a buyer for his island, and what a pity Joshua's love was cool on islands just now.

"Oh!" said Robert, "I know there are surprising Americans on the coast who will give money for what I have to sell."

Fullalove was silent a minute, then he got up of wood and a knife, and said, with an air of nation.

"I reckon we'll have to deal."

Need we say that to deal had been his course from the first.

He now began to whittle a peg, and awaited attack.

"What will you give me, sir?"

"What, money down? And you got nothing to sell but chances. Why, there's an old cuss that knows where the island is as well as you."

"Then of course you will treat with him," said Robert, sadly.

"Darned if I do," said the Yankee. "You're in trouble, and he is not, nor never will be in trouble, and then he'll get it hot, I calculate. He's a thief and stole my harpoon; you are an honest man and brought it back. I reckon I'll deal with you and not with that old cuss; not by a jugful! it must be on a percentage. You tell me the things of that there island, and I'll work it and give you five per cent on the gross."

"Would you mind throwing that piece of wood into the sea, Mr. Fullalove?" said Robert.

"Caen't be done, nohow. I caen't deal without whittlin'."

"You mean you can't take an unfair advantage without it. Come, Mr. Fullalove, let us cut the short. I am, as you say, an honest and most unfortunate man. Sir, I was falsely accused of a crime and banished my country. I can prove my innocence now if I can but get home with a great deal of money. So much for me. You are a member of the vainest and most generous nation in the world."

"Wal, now that's kinder honey and vinegar mixed," said Fullalove; "pretty good for a Britisher, though."

"You are a man of that nation, which in all the agonies and unparalleled expenses of civil war smarting, too, under anonymous taunts from England, did yet send over a large sum to relieve the distresses of certain poor Englishmen who were indirect victims of that same calamity. The next time, the misery relieved, the taunts overlooked, prove your nation superior to all others in generosity. At least my reading, which is very large, affords no parallel to it, either in ancient or modern history. Mr. Fullalove, please to recollect that you are a member of that nation, and that I am very unhappy and helpless, and want money to undo cruel wrongs, but have no heart to chaffer much. Take the island and the treasure, and give me half the profits you make. Is not that fair?"

Fullalove wore a rueful countenance.

"Darn the critter," said he, "he'll take skin off my bones if I don't mind. Fust Britisher ever I met as had the sense to see that. 'T was rather handsome, warn't it? Wal, human nature is deep; every man you tackle in business larns ye something. What with picking ye out o' the sea, and you giving me back the harpoon the cuss stole, and your face like a young calf, when you are the cutest for

, and you giving the great United States their
 I'm no more fit to deal than mashed potatoes.
 I caved: it is only for once. Next time don't
 try to palaver me. Draw me a map of our
 and, Britisher, and mark where the Spaniard lies:
 tell you I know her name, and the year she was
 in: I learned that at Lima one day. Kinder
 rttled me, you did, when you showed me the coin-
 of her. Wal, there's my hand on hael's profits,
 I, if I'm keen, I'm squar'."
 Soon after this he led Robert to his cabin, and
 Robert drew a large map from his models; and
 Fullalove, being himself an excellent draughtsman,
 provided with proper instruments, aided him
 finish it.
 Next day they sighted Valparaiso, and hove to
 outside the port.

All the specimens of insular wealth were put on
 board the schooner and secreted; for Fullalove's
 first move was to get a lease of the island from
 the Chilean Government, and it was no part of
 his plan to trumpet the article he was going to
 try.

After a moment's hesitation, he declined to take
 seven pounds of silver. He gave as a reason,
 at, having made a bargain which compelled him
 to go to Valparaiso at once, he did not feel like
 barging his partner a fancy price for towing his
 boat thither. At the same time he hinted that,
 later all this, the next customer would find him a
 very difficult Yankee to get the better of.

With this understanding, he gave Robert a draft
 for £80 on account of profits; and this enabled him
 to take a passage for England with all his be-
 longings.

He arrived at Southampton very soon after the
 events last related, and thence went to London,
 fully alive to the danger of his position.

He had a friend in his long beard, but he dared
 not rely on that alone. Like a mole, he worked at
 night.

CHAPTER LXVI

HELEN asked Arthur Wardlaw why he was so
 surprised at the prayer-book being brought back.
 Was it worth twenty pounds to any one except
 herself?

Arthur looked keenly at her to see whether she
 attended more than met the ear, and then said that
 he was surprised at the rapid effect of his advertise-
 ment, that was all.

"Now you have got the book," said he, "I do
 hope you will erase that cruel slander on one whom
 you mean to honor with your hand."

This proposal made Helen blush, and feel very
 miserable. Of the obnoxious lines some were written
 by Robert Penfold, and she had so little of his dear
 handwriting. "I feel you are right, Arthur," said
 she; "but you must give me time. Then, they
 shall meet no eye but mine; and on our wedding
 day — of course — all memorials of one —"
 Tears completed the sentence.

Arthur Wardlaw, raging with jealousy at the
 absent Penfold, as heretofore Penfold had raged at
 him, heaved a deep sigh and hurried away, while
 Helen was looking up the prayer-book in her desk.
 By this means he retained Helen's pity.

He went home directly, mounted to his bedroom,
 unlocked a safe, and plunged his hand into it. His
 hand encountered a book; he drew it out with a

shiver, and gazed at it with terror and amaze-
 ment.

It was the prayer-book he had picked up in the
 Square and locked up in that safe. Yet that very
 prayer-book had been restored to Helen before his
 eyes, and was now locked up in her desk. He sat
 down with the book in his hand, and a great dread
 came over him.

Hitherto Candor and Credulity only had been
 opposed to him, but now Cunning had entered the
 field against him; a master-hand was co-operating
 with Helen.

Yet, strange to say, she seemed unconscious of
 that co-operation. Had Robert Penfold found his
 way home by some strange means? Was he watch-
 ing over her in secret?

He had the woman he loved watched night and
 day, but no Robert Penfold was detected.

He puzzled his brain night and day, and at last
 he conceived a plan of deceit which is common
 enough in the East, where Lying is one of the fine
 arts, but was new in this country, we believe, and
 we hope to Heaven we shall not be the means of
 importing it.

An old clerk of his father's, now superannuated
 and pensioned off, had a son upon the stage, in a
 very mean position. Once a year, however, and of
 course in the dog-days, he had a kind of benefit at
 his suburban theatre; that is to say, the manager
 allowed him to sell tickets, and take half the price
 of them. He persuaded Arthur to take some, and
 even to go to the theatre for an hour. The man
 played a little part, of a pompous sneak, with some
 approach to Nature. He seemed at home.

Arthur found this man out; visited him at his
 own place. He was very poor, and mingled pom-
 posity with obsequiousness, so that Arthur felt con-
 vinced he was to be bought, body and soul, what
 there was of him.

He sounded him accordingly, and the result was
 that the man agreed to perform a part for him.

Arthur wrote it, and they rehearsed it together.
 As to the dialogue, that was so constructed that it
 could be varied considerably according to the cues,
 which could be foreseen to a certain extent; but
 not precisely, since they were to be given by Helen
 Rolleston, who was not in the secret.

But whilst this plot was fermenting, other events
 happened, with rather a contrary tendency; and
 these will be more intelligible if we go back to
 Nancy Rouse's cottage, where indeed we have kept
 Joseph Wylie in an uncomfortable position a very
 long time.

Mrs. James, from next door, was at last admitted
 into Nancy's kitchen, and her first word was, "I sup-
 pose you know what I'm come about, ma'am."

"Which it is to return me the sassa-parilla you bor-
 rowed, no doubt," was Nancy's ingenuous reply.

"No, ma'am. But I'll send my girl in with it,
 as soon as she have cleaned it, you may depend."

"Thank ye, I shall be glad to see it again."

"You're not afraid I shall steal it, I hope?"

"La, bless the woman! don't fly out at a body
 like that. I can't afford to give away my sassa-
 pan."

"Sassa-parilla is not in my head."

"Nor in your hand neither."

"I'm come about my lodger; a most respectable
 gentleman, which he have met with an accident.
 He did but go to put something away in the chim-
 bley, which he is a curious gent, and has travelled a
 good deal, and learned the foreign customs, when

his hand was caught in the brick-work, somehow, and there he is hard and fast."

"Do you know anything about this?" said Nancy to the mite, severely.

"No," said the mite, with a countenance of polished granite.

"La, bless me!" said Nancy, with a sudden start. "Why, is she talking about the thief as you and I caught putting his hand through the wall into my room, and made him fast again the policeman comes round?"

"Thief!" cried Mrs. James: "no more a thief than I am. Why, sure you would n't ever be so cruel! O dear! O dear! Spite goes a far length. There, take an' kill me, do, and then you'll be easy in your mind. Ah, little my poor father thought as ever I should come down to letting lodgings, and being maltreated this way! I am—"

"Who is a maltreating of ye? Why, you're dreaming. Have a drop o' gin?"

"With them as takes the police to my lodger? It would choke me!"

"Well, have a drop, and we'll see about it."

"You're very kind, ma'am, I'm sure. Heaven knows I need it! Here's wishing you a good husband; and towards burying all unkindness."

"Which you means drowning of it."

"Ah, you're never at a loss for a word, ma'am, and always in good spirits. But your troubles is to come. I'm a widdy. You will let me see what is the matter with my lodger, ma'am?"

"Why not? We'll go and have a look at him."

Accordingly, the three women and the mite proceeded to the little room; Nancy turned the gas on, and then they inspected the imprisoned hand. Mrs. James screamed with dismay, and Nancy asked her drily whether she was to blame for seizing a hand which had committed a manifest trespass.

"You have got the rest of his body," said she, "but this here hand belongs to me."

"Lord, ma'am, what could he take out of your chimbley, without 't was a handful of soot? Do, pray, let me loose him."

"Not till I have said two words to him."

"But how can you? He is n't here to speak to,—only a morsel of him."

"I can go into your house and speak to him."

Mrs. James demurred to that; but Nancy stood firm; Mrs. James yielded. Nancy whispered her myrmidons, and, in a few minutes, was standing by the prisoner, a reverend person in dark spectacles, and a gray beard, that created commiseration, or would have done so, but that this stroke of ill-fortune had apparently fallen upon a great philosopher. He had contrived to get a seat under him, and was smoking a pipe with admirable *sang-froid*.

At sight of Nancy, however, he made a slight motion, as if he would not object to follow his imprisoned hand through the party wall. It was only for a moment; the next, he smoked imperturbably.

"Well, sir," said Nancy, "I hopes you are comfortable?"

"Thank ye, miss; yes. I'm at a double sheet-anchor."

"Why do you call me miss?"

"I don't know. Because you are so young and pretty."

"That will do. I only wanted to hear the sound of your voice, Joe Wylie." And with the word she snatched his wig off with one hand, and his beard with the other, and revealed his true features to his astonished landlady.

"There, mum," said she, "I wish you joy of your

lodger." She tapped the chimney three times the poker, and, telling Mr. Wylie she had a few to say to him in private, retired for the present. Mrs. James sat down and mourned the wickedness of mankind, the loss of her lodger (who would go bodily next door instead of sending his in), and the better days she had by iteration led herself to believe she had seen.

Wylie soon entered Nancy's house, and the question was, "The £2,000, how did you get it?"

"No matter how I got them," said Wylie.

"What have you done with them?"

"Put them away."

"That is all right. I'm blest if I didn't see they were gone forever."

"I wish they had never come. Ill-gotten money is a curse." Then she taxed him with scuttling Proserpine, and asked him whether that money had not been the bribe. But Joe was obdurate. "I never split on a friend," said he. "And you're nobody to blame but yourself, you would n't get without £2,000. I loved you, and I got it for you. D'ye think a poor fellow like me can get £2,000 in a voyage by hauling in ropes, and tie true-lovers' knots in the foretop?"

Nancy had her answer ready; but this rebuke pricked her own conscience and paved a way to a reconciliation. Nancy had no high-toned notions. She loved money, but it must be got with out palpable dishonesty; *per contra*, she was not going to denounce her sweetheart, but then again she would not marry him so long as he differed with her about the meaning of the eighth commandment.

This led to many arguments, some of them warm, some affectionate; and so we leave Mr. Wylie under the slow but salutary influence of love and unpretending probity. He continued to lodge next door. Nancy would only receive him as a visitor.

CHAPTER LXVII

HELEN had complained to Arthur, of all people, that she was watched and followed; she even asked him whether that was not the act of some enemy. Arthur smiled, and said, "Take my word for it, it is only some foolish admirer of your beauty; he wants to know your habits, in hopes of falling in with you; you had better let me go out with you for the next month or so; that sort of thing will soon die away."

As a necessary consequence of this injudicious revelation, Helen was watched with greater skill and subtlety, and upon a plan well calculated to disarm suspicion; a spy watched the door, and by a signal unintelligible to any but his confederate, whom Helen could not possibly see, set the latter on her track. They kept this game up unobserved for several days, but learned nothing, for Helen was at a standstill. At last they got caught, and by a truly feminine stroke of observation. A showily dressed man peeped into a shop where Helen was buying gloves.

With one glance of her woman's eye she recognized a large breastpin in the worst possible taste; thence her eye went up and recognized the features of her seedy follower, though he was now dressed up to the nine. She withdrew her eye directly, completed her purchase, and went home, brooding of fence and vengeance.

That evening she dined with a lady who had a large acquaintance with lawyers, and it so happened that Mr. Tollemache and Mr. Hennessy were both of the party. Now, when these gentlemen saw Helen in full costume, a crown in fact as well as in name,

ated with her island pearls, environed with a halo of romance, and courted by women as well as men, they looked up to her with astonishment, and made up to her in a very different style from that in which they had received her visit. Tollemache she received coldly; he had defended Robert Penfold slyly, and she hated him for it. Hennessy she received graciously, and, remembering Robert's precept to be supple as a woman, bewitched him. He was good-natured, able, and vain. By eleven o'clock she had enlisted him in her service. When he had conquered him, she said, slyly, "But I ought not to speak of these things to you except through a solicitor."

"That is the general rule," said the learned counsel; "but in this case no dark body must come between me and the sun."

In short he entered into Penfold's case with such well-feigned warmth, to please the beautiful girl, that at last she took him by the horns and consulted.

"I am followed," said she.

"I have no doubt you are; and on a large scale; if there is room for another, I should be glad to join the train."

"Ha! ha! I'll save you the trouble. I'll meet you half-way. But, to be serious, I am watched, spied, and followed by some enemy to that good friend whose sacred cause we have undertaken. Forgive me for saying 'we.'"

"I am too proud of the companionship to let you off. 'We' is the word."

"Then advise me what to do. I want to retaliate. I want to discover who is watching me, and why. Can you advise me? Will you?"

The counsel reflected a moment, and Helen, who watched him, remarked the power that suddenly came into his countenance and brow.

"You must watch the spies. I have influence in Scotland Yard, and will get it done for you. If you went there yourself, they would cross-examine you and decline to interfere. I'll go myself for you, and put it in a certain light. An able detective will call on you: give him ten guineas, and let him into your views in confidence; then he will work the public machinery for you."

"O Mr. Hennessy, how can I thank you?"

"By succeeding. I hate to fail: and now your cause is mine."

Next day a man with a hooked nose, a keen black eye, and a solitary foible (Mosaic), called on Helen Rolleston, and told her he was to take her instructions. She told him she was watched, and thought it was done to baffle a mission she had undertaken: but, having got so far, she blushed and hesitated.

"The more you tell me, miss, the more use I can be," said Mr. Burt.

Thus encouraged, and also remembering Mr. Hennessy's advice, she gave Mr. Burt, as coldly as she could, an outline of Robert Penfold's case, and of the exertions she had made, and the small result.

Burt listened keenly, and took a note or two; and, when she had done, he told her something in return.

"Miss Rolleston," said he, "I am the officer that arrested Robert Penfold. It cost me a grinder that he knocked out."

"O, dear!" said Helen, "how unfortunate! Then I fear I cannot reckon on your services."

"Why not, miss? What, do you think I hold spite against a poor fellow for defending himself? Besides, Mr. Penfold wrote me a very proper note. Certainly for a parson the gent is a very quick hitter; but he wrote very square; said he hoped I would allow for the surprise and the agitation of an

innocent man; sent me two guineas too, and said he would make it twenty but he was poor as well as unfortunate; that letter has stuck in my gizzard ever since; can't see the color of felony in it. Your felon is never in a fault; and, if he wears a good coat, he is n't given to show fight."

"It was very improper of him to strike you," said Helen, "and very noble of you to forgive it. Make him still more ashamed of it: lay him under a deep obligation."

"If he is innocent, I'll try and prove it," said the Detective. He then asked her if she had taken notes. She said she had a diary. He begged to see it. She felt inclined to withhold it, because of the comments; but, remembering that this was womanish, and that Robert's orders to her were to be manly on such occasions, she produced her diary. Mr. Burt read it very carefully, and told her it was a very promising case. "You have done a great deal more than you thought," he said. "You have netted the fish."

CHAPTER LXVIII.

"I' NETTED the fish! what fish?"

"The man who forged the promissory note."

"O Mr. Burt!"

"The same man that forged the newspaper extracts to deceive you forged the promissory note years ago, and the man who is setting spies on you is the man who forged those extracts; so we are sure to nail him. He is in the net; and very much to your credit. Leave the rest to me. I'll tell you more about it to-morrow. You must order your carriage at one o'clock to-morrow and drive down to Scotland Yard; go into the yard, and you will see me; follow me without a word. When you go back, the other spies will be so frightened, they will go off to their employer, and so we shall nail him."

Helen complied with their instructions strictly, and then returned home, leaving Mr. Burt to work. She had been home about half an hour, when the servant brought her up a message saying that a man wanted to speak to her. "Admit him," said Helen. "He is dressed very poor, miss." "Never mind; send him to me." She was afraid to reject anybody now, lest she might turn her back on information.

A man presented himself in well-worn clothes, with a wash-leather face and close-shaven chin; a little of his forehead was also shaven. "Madam, my name is Hand." Helen started. "I have already had the honor of writing to you."

"Yes, sir," said Helen, eyeing him with fear and aversion.

"Madam, I am come" — (he hesitated) — "I am an unfortunate man. Weighed down by remorse for a thoughtless act that has ruined an innocent man, and nearly cost my worthy employer his life, I come to expiate as far as in me lies. But let me be brief, and hurry over the tale of shame. I was a clerk at Wardlaw's office. A bill-broker called Adams was talking to me and my fellow-clerks, and boasting that nobody could take him in with a feigned signature. Bets were laid; our vanity was irritated by his pretension. It was my fortune to overhear my young master and his friend Robert Penfold speak about a loan of two thousand pounds. In an evil hour I listened to the tempter, and wrote a forged note for that amount. I took it to Mr. Penfold; he presented it to Adams, and it was cashed. I intended, of course, to call next day, and tell Mr. Penfold, and take him to Adams, and restore the money, and get back the note. It was not due for three months. Alas! that very day it fell under suspicion. M

Penfold was arrested. My young master was struck down with illness at his friend's guilt, though he never could be quite got to believe it; and I—miserable coward!—dared not tell the truth. Ever since that day I have been a miserable man. The other day I came into money, and left Wardlaw's service. But I carry my remorse with me. Madam, I am come to tell the truth. I dare not tell it to Mr. Wardlaw; I think he would kill me. But I will tell it to you, and you can tell it to him; ay, tell it to all the world. Let my shame be as public as his whom I have injured so deeply, but, Heaven knows, unintentionally. I—I—I—"

Mr. Hand sank all in a heap where he sat, and could say no more.

Helen's flesh crawled at this confession, and at the sight of this reptile who owned that he had destroyed Robert Penfold in fear and cowardice. For a long time her wrath so overpowered all sense of pity, that she sat trembling; and, if eyes could kill, Mr. Hand would not have outlived his confession.

At last she contrived to speak. She turned her head away not to see the wretch, and said, sternly,—

"Are you prepared to make this statement on paper, if called on?"

Mr. Hand hesitated, but said "Yes."

"Then write down that Robert Penfold was innocent, and you are ready to prove it whenever you may be called upon."

"Write that down?" said Hand.

"Unless your penitence is feigned, you will."

"Sooner than that should be added to my crime I will avow all." He wrote the few lines she required.

"Now your address, that I may know where to find you at a moment's notice." He wrote "J. Hand, 11 Warwick Street, Fimlico."

Helen then dismissed him, and wept bitterly. In that condition she was found by Arthur Wardlaw, who comforted her, and, on hearing her report of Hand's confession, burst out into triumph, and reminded her he had always said Robert Penfold was innocent. "My father," said he, "must yield to this evidence, and we will lay it before the Secretary of State, and get his pardon."

"His pardon! when he is innocent!"

"O, that is the form,—the only form. The rest must be done by the warm reception of his friends. I, for one, who all these years have maintained his innocence, will be the first to welcome him to my house, an honored guest. What am I saying? Can I? dare I? ought I? when my wife—Ah! I am more to be pitied than my poor friend is: my friend, my rival. Well, I leave it to you whether he can come into your husband's house."

"Never."

"But, at least, I can send the Springbok out, and bring him home; and that I will do without one day's delay."

"O Arthur!" cried Helen, "you set me an example of unselfishness."

"I do what I can," said Arthur. "I am no saint. I hope for a reward."

Helen sighed. "What shall I do?"

"Have pity on me! your faithful lover, and to whom your faith was pledged before ever you saw or knew my unhappy friend. What can I do or suffer more than I have done and suffered for you? My sweet Helen, have pity on me, and be my wife."

"I will; some day."

"Bless you: bless you. One effort more: what lay?"

"I can't. I can't. My heart is dead."

"This day fortnight. Let me speak to your father: let him name the day."

As she made no reply, he kissed her hand devotedly, and did speak to her father. Sir Edw. meaning all for the best, said, "This day fortnight."

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE next morning came the first wedding presents from the jubilant bridegroom, who was determined to advance step by step, and give no breathing time. When Helen saw them laid out by a maid, she trembled at the consequences of not giving a plump negative to so brisk a wooer.

The second post brought two letters; one of them from Mrs. Undercliff. The other contained a word, but only a pearl of uncommon size, and pear-shaped. Helen received this at first as another wedding present, and an attempt on Arthur's part to give her a pearl as large as those she had gathered in her dear island. But, looking narrowly at the dress, she saw it was not written by Arthur; as presently, she was struck by the likeness of a pearl in shape to some of her own. She got out her pearls, laid them side by side, and began to move exceedingly. She had one of her insides and it set every fibre quivering with excitement. It was some time before she could take her eyes from the pearls, and it was with a trembling hand she opened Mrs. Undercliff's letter. That missive was not calculated to calm her. It ran thus:—

"MY DEAR YOUNG LADY,—A person called here last night and supplied the clew. If you have the courage to know the truth, you have only to come here, and to bring your diary, and all the letters you have received from any person or persons since you landed in England. I am yours obediently,

"JANE UNDERCLIFF."

The courage to know the truth!

This mysterious sentence affected Helen considerably. But her faith in Robert was too great to be shaken. She would not wait for the canonical hour at which young ladies go out, but put on her bonnet directly after breakfast. Early as she was, a visitor came before she could start,—Mr. Burt, the Detective. She received him in the library.

Mr. Burt looked at her dress and her little bag, and said, "I'm very glad I made bold to call so early."

"You have got information of importance to communicate to me?"

"I think so, miss"; and he took out his notebook. "The person you are watched by is Mr. Arthur Wardlaw." The girl stared at him. "Both spies report to him twice a day at his house in Russell Square."

"Be careful, Mr. Burt; this is a serious thing to say, and may have serious consequences."

"Well, miss, you told me you wanted to know the truth."

"Of course I want to know the truth."

"Then the truth is that you are watched by order of Mr. Wardlaw."

Burt continued his report.

"A shabby-like man called on you yesterday."

"Yes; it was Mr. Hand, Mr. Wardlaw's clerk. And O Mr. Burt, that wretched creature came and confessed the truth. It was he who forged the note, out of sport, and for a bet, and then was too cowardly to own it." She then detailed Hand's confession.

"His penitence comes too late," said she, with a deep sigh.

"It has n't come yet," said Burt, dryly. "Of course my lambs followed the man. He went first

his employer, and then he went home. His name not Hand. He is not a clerk at all, but a little tior at the Corinthian Saloon. Hand is in America; went three months ago. I ascertained that in another quarter."

"O, goodness!" cried Helen, "what a wretched world! I can't see my way a yard for stories."

"How should you, miss? It is clear enough, for that. Mr. Wardlaw hired this actor to pass for Hand, and tell you a lie that he thought would ease you."

Helen put her hand to her brow, and thought; at her candid soul got sadly in the way of her rain. "Mr. Burt," said she, "will you go with me to Mr. Undercliff, the Expert?"

"With pleasure, ma'am; but let me finish my report. Last night there was something new. Your house was watched by six persons. Two were Wardlaw's, three were Burt's; but the odd man was none on his own hook; and my men could not make him out at all; but they think one of Wardlaw's men knew him; for he went off to Russell Square like he wind, and brought Mr. Wardlaw here in disguise. Now, miss, that is all; and shall I call a cab, and we'll hear Undercliff's tale?"

The cab was called, and they went to Undercliff. On the way Helen brooded; but the Detective eyed every man and everything on the road with the utmost keenness.

Edward Undercliff was at work at lithographing. He received Helen cordially, nodded to Burt, and said she could not have a better assistant.

He then laid his fac-simile of the forged note on the table, with John Wardlaw's genuine writing and Penfold's indorsement. "Look at that, Mr. Burt."

Burt inspected the papers keenly.

"You know, Burt, I swore at Robert Penfold's trial that he never wrote that forged note."

"I remember," said Burt.

"The other day this lady instructed me to discover, if I could, who did write the forged note. But, unfortunately, the materials she gave me were not sufficient. But, last night, a young man dropped from the clouds, that I made sure was an agent of yours, Miss Rolleston. Under that impression I was rather unguarded, and I let him know how far we had got, and could go no farther. 'I think I can help you,' says this young man, and puts a letter on the table. 'Well, Mr. Burt, a glance at that letter was enough for me. It was written by the man who forged the note.'"

"A letter!" said Helen.

"Yes. I'll put the letter by the side of the forged note, and, if you have any eye for writing at all, you'll see at once that one hand wrote the forged note and this letter. I am also prepared to swear that the letters signed Hand are forgeries by the same person." He then coolly put upon the table the letter from Arthur Wardlaw that Helen had received on board the Proserpine, and was proceeding to point out the many points of resemblance between the letter and the document, when he was interrupted by a scream from Helen.

"Ah!" she cried, "he is here. Only one man in the world could have brought that letter. I left it on the island. 'Robert is here: he gave you that letter.'"

"You are right," said the Expert, "and what a fool I must be! I have no eye except for handwriting. He had a beard: and such a beard!"

"It is Robert!" cried Helen, in raptures. "He is come just in time."

"In time to be arrested," said Burt. "Why, his face is not out. He'll not into a trouble again."

"O, Heaven forbid!" cried Helen, and turned so faint she had to be laid back on a chair, and salts applied to her nostrils.

She soon came to, and cried and trembled, but prepared to defend her Robert with all a woman's wit. Burt and Undercliff were conversing in a low voice, and Burt was saying he felt sure Wardlaw's spies had detected Robert Penfold, and that Robert would be arrested and put into prison as a runaway convict. "Go to Scotland Yard this minute, Mr. Burt," said Helen, eagerly.

"What for?"

"Why, you must take the commission to arrest him. You are our friend."

Burt slapped his thigh with delight.

"That is first-rate, miss," said he: "I'll take the real felon first, you may depend. Now, Mr. Undercliff, write your report, and hand it to Miss Helen with fac-similes. It will do no harm if you make a declaration to the same effect before a magistrate. You, Miss Rolleston, keep yourself disengaged, and please don't go out. You will very likely hear from me again to-day."

He drove off; and Helen, though still greatly agitated by Robert's danger and the sense of his presence, now sat down, trembling a little, and compared Arthur's letter with the forged document. The effect of this comparison was irresistible. The Expert, however, asked her for some letter of Arthur's that had never passed through Robert Penfold's hands. She gave him the short note in which he used the very words, Robert Penfold. He said he would make that note the basis of his report.

While he was writing it, Mrs. Undercliff came in, and Helen told her all. She said, "I came to the same conclusion long ago; but when you said he was to be your husband—"

"Ah," said Helen, "we women are poor creatures; we can always find some reason for running away from the truth. Now explain about the prayer-book."

"Well, miss, I felt sure he would steal it, so I made Ned produce a fac-simile. And he did steal it. What you got back was your mother's prayer-book. Of course I took care of that."

"O Mrs. Undercliff," cried Helen, "do let me kiss you."

Then they had a nice little cry together, and, by the time they had done, the report was ready in duplicate.

"I'll declare this before a magistrate," said the Expert, "and then I'll send it you."

At four o'clock of this eventful day, Helen got a message from Burt to say that he had orders to arrest Robert Penfold, and that she must wear a mask, and ask Mr. Wardlaw to meet her at old Mr. Penfold's at nine o'clock. But she herself must be there at half-past eight, without fail, and bring Undercliff's declaration and report with her, and the prayer-book, etc.

Accordingly, Helen went down to old Mr. Penfold's at half-past eight, and was received by Nancy Rouse, and ushered into Mr. Penfold's room; that is to say, Nancy held the door open, and, on her entering the room, shut it sharply and ran down stairs.

Helen entered the room; a man rose directly, and came to her; but it was not Michael Penfold, — it was Robert. A faint scream, a heavenly sigh, and her head was on his shoulder, and her arm round his neck; and both their hearts panting as they gazed, and then clung to each other, and then gazed again with love unutterable. After a while they sat down, and began to talk. Helen said, "I am not a faint hearted woman, but I am a woman of feeling."

hand and compare notes. And Helen showed him their weapons of defence, the prayer-book, the Expert's report, etc.

A discreet tap was heard at the door. It was Nancy Rouse. On being invited to enter, she came in, and said, "O Miss Helen, I've got a penitent outside, which he done it for love of me, and now he'll make a clean breast, and the fault was partly mine. Come in, Joe, and speak for yourself."

On this, Joe Wylie came in, hanging his head piteously.

"She is right, sir," said he; "I'm come to ask your pardon and the lady's. Not as I ever meant you any harm; but to destroy the ship, it was a bad act, and I've never throve since. Nance, she have got the money. I'll give it back to the underwriters; and, if you and the lady will forgive a poor fellow that was tempted with love and money, why I'll stand to the truth for you, though it's a bitter pill."

"I forgive you," said Robert; "and I accept your offer to serve me."

"And so do I," said Helen. "Indeed, it is not us you have wronged. But O, I am glad, for Nancy's sake, that you repent."

"Miss, I'll go through fire and water for you," said Wylie, lifting up his head.

Here old Michael came in to say that Arthur Wardlaw was at the door, with a policeman.

"Show him in," said Robert.

"O no, Robert!" said Helen. "He fills me with horror."

"Show him in," said Robert, gently. "Sit down, all of you."

Now Burt had not told Arthur who was in the house, so he came, rather uneasy in his mind, but still expecting only to see Helen.

Robert Penfold told Helen to face the door, and the rest to sit back; and this arrangement had not been effected one second, when Arthur came in, with a lover's look, and, taking two steps into the room, saw the three men waiting to receive him. At sight of Penfold, he started, and turned pale as ashes; but, recovering himself, said: "My dearest Helen, this is indeed an unexpected pleasure. You will reconcile me to one whose worth and innocence I never doubted, and tell him I have had some little hand in clearing him." His effrontery was received in dead silence. This struck cold to his bones, and, being naturally weak, he got violent. He said, "Allow me to send a message to my servant."

He then tore a leaf out of his memorandum-book, wrote on it, "Robert Penfold is here; arrest him directly, and take him away," and, enclosing this in an envelope, sent it out to Burt by Nancy.

Helen seated herself quietly, and said, "Mr. Wardlaw, when did Mr. Hand go to America?" Arthur stammered out, "I don't know the exact date."

"Two or three months ago?"

"Yes."

"Then the person you sent to me to tell me that falsehood was not Mr. Hand?"

"I sent nobody."

"O, for shame!—for shame! Why have you set spies? Why did you make away with my prayer-book;—or what you thought was my prayer-book? Here is my prayer-book, that proves you had the Proserpine destroyed; and I should have lost my life but for another, whom you had done your best to destroy. Look Robert Penfold in the face, if you can."

Arthur's eyes began to waver. "I can," said he. "I never wronged him. I always lamented his misfortune."

"You were not the cause?"

"Never!—so help me Heaven!"

"Monster!" said Helen, turning away in a tempest and horror.

"O, that is it,—is it?" said Arthur, wildly. "I break faith with me for him? You insult me him? I must bear anything from you, for I'm you; but, at least, I will sweep him out of the place."

He ran to the door, opened it, and there was he listening. "Are you an officer?"

"Yes."

"Then arrest that man this moment: he is Robert Penfold, a convict returned before his time."

Burt came into the room, locked the door, and held the key in his pocket. "Well, sir," said he to Robert Penfold, "I know you are a quick hitter. But let us have a row over it this time. If you have anything to say, say it quiet and comfortable."

"I will go with you on one condition," said Robert. "You must take the felon as well as the man. This is the felon," and he laid his hand on Arthur's shoulder, who cowered under the touch at first, and soon began to act violent indignation.

"Take the ruffian away at once," he cried.

"What, before I hear what he has got to say?"

"Would you listen to him against a merchant of this city of London, a man of unblemished reputation?"

"Well, sir, you see we have got a hint that we were concerned in scuttling a ship; and that's felony. So I think I'll just hear what he has got to say. You need not fear any man's tongue if you are innocent."

"Sit down, if you please, and examine these documents," said Robert Penfold. "As to the scuttling of the ship, here is the deposition of two seamen, taken on their death-bed, and witnessed by Miss Rolleston and myself."

"And that book he tried to steal," said Helen.

Robert continued: "And here is Undercliff's facsimile of the forged note. Here are specimens of Arthur Wardlaw's handwriting, and here is Undercliff's report."

The Detective ran his eye hastily over the report, which we slightly condense.

On comparing the forged note with genuine specimens of John Wardlaw's handwriting, no less than twelve deviations from his habits of writing strike the eye; and every one of these twelve deviations is a deviation into a habit of Arthur Wardlaw, which is an amount of demonstration rarely attained in cases of forgery.

1. THE CAPITAL L.—Compare in London (forged note) with the same letter in London in Wardlaw's letter.

2. THE CAPITAL D.—Compare this letter in "Date," with the same letter in "Dearest."

3. THE CAPITAL T.—Compare it in "Two" and "Tollemache."

4. The word "To;" see "To pay," in forged note and third line of letter.

5. Small "o" formed with a loop in the up stroke.

6. The manner of finishing the letter "v."

7. Ditto the letter "w."

8. The imperfect formation of the small "a." This and the looped "o" run through the forged note and Arthur Wardlaw's letter, and are habits entirely foreign to the style of John Wardlaw.

9. See the "th" in connection.

10. Ditto the "of" in connection.

11. The incautious use of the Greek ϵ . John Wardlaw never uses this ϵ . Arthur Wardlaw never uses any other ϵ apparently. The writer of

To enable the reader to follow Mr. Undercliff's Summary, the materials of his judgment are here reproduced. (See page 134)

The Forged Note.

£2000,000

London, February 10th 1864.

Three Months after Date, I promise
to pay Brevet General Sir David, the sum
of Two thousand pounds, value received.

The genuine handwriting of John Wardlaw.

I promise to pay
One thousand pounds

John Wardlaw

John Wardlaw

he forged note began right, but at the word Robert Penfold glided insensibly into his Greek ϵ , and maintained it to the end of the forgery. This looks as if he was in the habit of writing those two words.

12. Compare the words "Robert Penfold" in the forged document with the same words in the letter. The similarity is so striking, that, on these two words alone, the writer could be identified beyond a doubt.

13. Great pains were taken with the signature, and it is like John Wardlaw's writing on the surface; but go below the surface, and it is all Arthur Wardlaw.

The looped o, the small r, the l dropping below the d, the open a, are all Arthur Wardlaw's. The open loop of the final w is a still bolder deviation into A. W.'s own hand. The final flourish is a curious mistake. It is executed with skill and freedom; but the writer has made the lower line the thick one. Yet John Wardlaw never does this.

How was the deviation caused? Examine the final flourish in Arthur Wardlaw's signature. It contains one stroke only, but then that stroke is a thick one. He thought he had only to prolong his own stroke and bring it round. He did this extremely well, but missed the deeper characteristic, — the thick upper stroke. This is proof of a high character: and altogether I am quite prepared to testify upon oath that the writer of the letter to Miss Rolleston, who signs himself Arthur Wardlaw, is the person who forged the promissory note.

To these twelve proofs one more was now added. Arthur Wardlaw rose, and, with his knees knocking together, said, "Don't arrest him, Burt; let him go."

"Don't let him go," cried old Penfold. "A villain! I have got the number of the notes from Benson. I can prove he bribed this poor man to destroy the ship. Don't let him go. He has ruined my poor boy."

At this Arthur Wardlaw began to shriek for mercy. "O Mr. Penfold," said he, "you are a father, and hate me. But think of my father. I'll say anything, do anything. I'll clear Robert Penfold at my own expense. I have lost her. She loathes me now. Have mercy on me, and let me leave the country!" He cringed and crawled so that he disarmed anger, and substituted contempt.

"Ay," said Burt. "He don't bit like you, Mr. Penfold; this is a chap that ought to have been in Newgate long ago. But take my advice; make him clear you on paper, and then let him go. I'll go down stairs awhile. I must n't take part in compounding a felony."

"O yes, Robert," said Helen, "for his father's sake."

"Very well," said Robert. "Now then, reptile, take the pen, and write in your own hand, if you can."

He took the pen, and wrote to dictation: —

"I, Arthur Wardlaw, confess that I forged the promissory note for £2,000, and sent it to Robert Penfold, and that £1,400 of it was to be for my own use, and to pay my Oxford debts. And I confess that I bribed Wylie to scuttle the ship Proserpine in order to cheat the underwriters."

Penfold then turned to Wylie, and asked him the true motive of this fraud.

"Why, the gold was aboard the Shannon," said Wylie; "I played hanky panky with the metals in White's store."

"Put that down," said Penfold. "Now go on."

"Make a clean breast," said Wylie. "I have. Say as how you cooked the Proserpine's log, and forged Hiram Hudson's writing."

"And the newspaper extracts you sent me," said Helen, "and the letters from Mr. Hand."

Arthur groaned. "Must I tell all that?" said he.

"Every word, or be indicted," said Robert Penfold, sternly.

He wrote it all down, and then sat staring stupidly. And the next thing was, he gave a loud shriek, and fell on the floor in a fit. They sprinkled water over him, and Burt conveyed him home in a cab, advising him to leave the country, but at the same time promising him not to exasperate those he had wronged so deeply, but rather to moderate them, if required. Then he gave Burt fifty guineas.

Robert Penfold, at Helen's request, went with her to Mr. Hennessy, and with the proofs of Arthur's guilt and Robert's innocence; and he undertook that the matter should go in proper form before the Secretary of State. But, somehow, it transpired that the Proserpine had been scuttled, and several of the underwriters wrote to the Wardlaws to threaten proceedings. Wardlaw senior returned but one answer to these gentlemen: "Bring your proofs to me at my place of business next Monday at twelve, and let me judge the case, before you go elsewhere."

"That is high and mighty," said one or two; but they conferred, and agreed to these terms, so high stood the old merchant's name.

They came; they were received with stiff courtesy. The deposition of Cooper and Welch was produced, and Wylie, kept up to the mark by Nancy, told the truth, and laid his two thousand pounds intact down on the table. "Now that is off my stomach," said he, "and I'm a man again."

"Ay, and I'll marry you next week," said Nancy.

"Well, gentlemen," said old Wardlaw, "my course seems very clear. I will undo the whole transaction, and return you your money less the premiums, but plus five per cent interest." And this he did on the spot, for the firm was richer than ever.

When they were gone, Robert Penfold came in, and said, "I hear, sir, you devote this day to repairing the wrongs done by your firm; What can you do for me?" He laid a copy of Arthur's confession before him.

The old man winced a moment where he sat, and the iron passed through his soul. It was a long time before he could speak. At last he said, "This wrong is irreparable, I fear."

Robert said nothing. Sore as his own heart was, he was not the one to strike a grand old man, struggling so bravely against dishonor.

Wardlaw senior touched his hand-bell.

"Request Mr. Penfold to step this way."

Michael Penfold came.

"Gentlemen," said the old merchant, "the house of Wardlaw exists no more. It was built on honesty, and cannot survive a fraud. Wardlaw and Son were partners at will. I had decided to dissolve that partnership, wind up the accounts, and put up the shutters. But now, if you like, I will value the effects, and hand the business over to Penfold and Son on easy terms. Robert Penfold has been accused of forging John Wardlaw's name; to prove this was a calumny, I put Penfold over my door instead of Wardlaw. The city of London will understand that, gentlemen, believe me."

"Mr. Wardlaw," said Robert, "you are a just, a noble —" He could say no more.

"Ah, sir," said Michael, "if the young gentleman had only been like you!"

"Mention his name no more to me. His crime and his punishment have killed me."

"O," said Robert, hastily, "he shall not be punished, for your sake."

"Not be punished? It is not in your hands to decide. God has punished him. He is insane."

"Good Heavens!"

"Quite mad;—quite mad. Gentlemen, I can no longer support this interview. Send me your solicitor's address; the deeds shall be prepared. I wish the new firm success. Probity is the road to it. Good day."

He wound up the affairs, had his name and Arthur's painted out at his own expense, and directed the painters to paint the Penfolds' in at theirs; went home to Elm Trees, and died in three days. He died lamented and honored, and Robert Penfold was much affected. He got it into his head that he had killed him with Arthur's confession, putting it before him so suddenly. "I have forgotten who said 'Vengeance is mine,'" said Robert Penfold.

The merchant priest left the office to be conducted by his father; he used the credit of the new firm to purchase a living in the Vale of Kent; and thither he retired, grateful to Providence, but not easy in his conscience. He now accused himself of having often distrusted God, and seen his fellow-creatures in too dark a light. He turned towards religion and the care of souls.

Past suffering enlightens a man, and makes him tender; and people soon began to walk and drive considerable distances to hear the new vicar. He had a lake with a peninsula, the shape of which he altered, at a great expense, as soon as he came there. He wrote to Helen every day, and she to him. Neither could do anything *con amore* till the post came in.

One afternoon, as he was preaching with great unction, he saw a long puritanical face looking up at him with a droll expression of amazement and half irony. The stranger called on him, and began at once, "Wal, parson, you are a buster, you air. You ginn it us hot,—you did. I'm darned if I ain't kinder ashamed to talk of this world's goods to a saint upon airth like you. But I never knowed a parson yet as couldn't collar the dollars."

After this preamble he announced that he had got a lease of the island from Chili, dug a lot of silver plate out of the galleon, sold ten tons of choice coral, and a ship-load of cassia and cocoa-nuts. He had then disposed of his lease to a Californian Company for a large sum. And his partner's share of net profits came to 17,247*l.* 13*s.* 3*d.*, which sum he had paid to Michael, for Robert, Penfold in drafts on Baring, at thirty days after sight.

Robert shook his hand, and thanked him sincerely for his ability and probity. He stayed that night at the Vicarage, and by that means fell in with another acquaintance. General Rolleston and his daughter drove down to see the Parsonage. Helen wanted to surprise Robert; and, as often happens, she surprised herself. She made him show her everything; and so he took her on to his peninsula. Lo! the edges of it had been cut and altered, so that it presented a miniature copy of Godsend Island.

As soon as she saw this, Helen turned round with a sudden cry of love, "O Robert!" and the lovers were in each other's arms.

"What could any other man ever be to me?"

"And what could any other woman ever be to me?"

They knew that before. But this miniature island made them speak out and say it. The wedding day was fixed before she left.

Her Majesty pardoned this scholar, hero, and worthy, the crime he had never committed.

Nancy Rouse took the penitent Wylie without a *£*2,000. But old Penfold, who knew the history, lent the money at three per cent; so the Wylies pay a groundrent of *£*60 a year for property which, by Mrs. Wylie's industry and judgment, is worth at least *£*400. She pays this cheerfully, and appeals to Joe whether that is better than the other way.

"Why, Joe," says she, "to a woman like me that's afoot all day, 't is worth sixty pounds a year to be a good sleeper; and I should n't be that if I had wronged my neighbor."

Arthur Wardlaw is in a private lunatic asylum and is taken great care of. In his lucid intervals he suffers horrible distress of mind; but, though he sees, these agonies furnish the one hope of his ultimate recovery. When not troubled by the returns of reason, he is contented enough. His favorite employment is to get Mr. Undercliff's *fr* similes, and to write love-letters to Helen Rolleston which are duly deposited in the post-office *the establishment*. These letters are in the handwriting of Charles I., Paoli, Lord Bacon, Alexander Pope, Lord Chesterfield, Nelson, Lord Shaftesbury, Addison, the late Duke of Wellington, and so on. And, strange to say, the Greek *e* never appears in any of them. They are admirably like, though, of course, the matter is not always equally consistent with the characters of those personages.

Helen Rolleston married Robert Penfold. On the wedding-day, the presents were laid out, and amongst them there was a silver-box encrusted with coral. Female curiosity demanded that this box should be opened. Helen objected, but her bridesmaids rebelled; the whole company sided with them, and Robert smiled a careless assent. A blacksmith and carpenter were both enlisted, and with infinite difficulty the poor box was riven open.

Inside was another box, locked, but with no key. That was opened with comparative ease, and then handed to the bride. It contained nothing but Papal indulgences and rough stones, and fair throats were opened in some disappointment.

A lady, however, of more experience, examined the contents, and said, that, in her opinion, many of them were uncut gems of great price; there were certainly a quantity of jaspers and bloodstones, and others of no value at all. "But look at these two pearl-shaped diamonds," said she; "why, they are a little fortune! and, Oh!" The stone that struck this fair creature dumb was a rough ruby as big as a blackbird's egg, and of amazing depth and fire. "No lady in England," said she, "has a ruby to compare with this."

The information proved correct. The box furnished Helen with diamonds and emeralds of great thickness and quality. But the huge ruby placed her on a level with sovereigns. She wears it now and then in London, but not often. It attracts too much attention, blazing on her fair forehead like a star, and eclipses everything.

Well, what her ruby is amongst stones she is amongst wives. And he is worthy of her. Through much injustice, suffering, danger, and trouble, they have passed to health, happiness, and peace, and that entire union of two noble hearts, in loyal friendship and wedded love, which is the truest bliss this earth affords.

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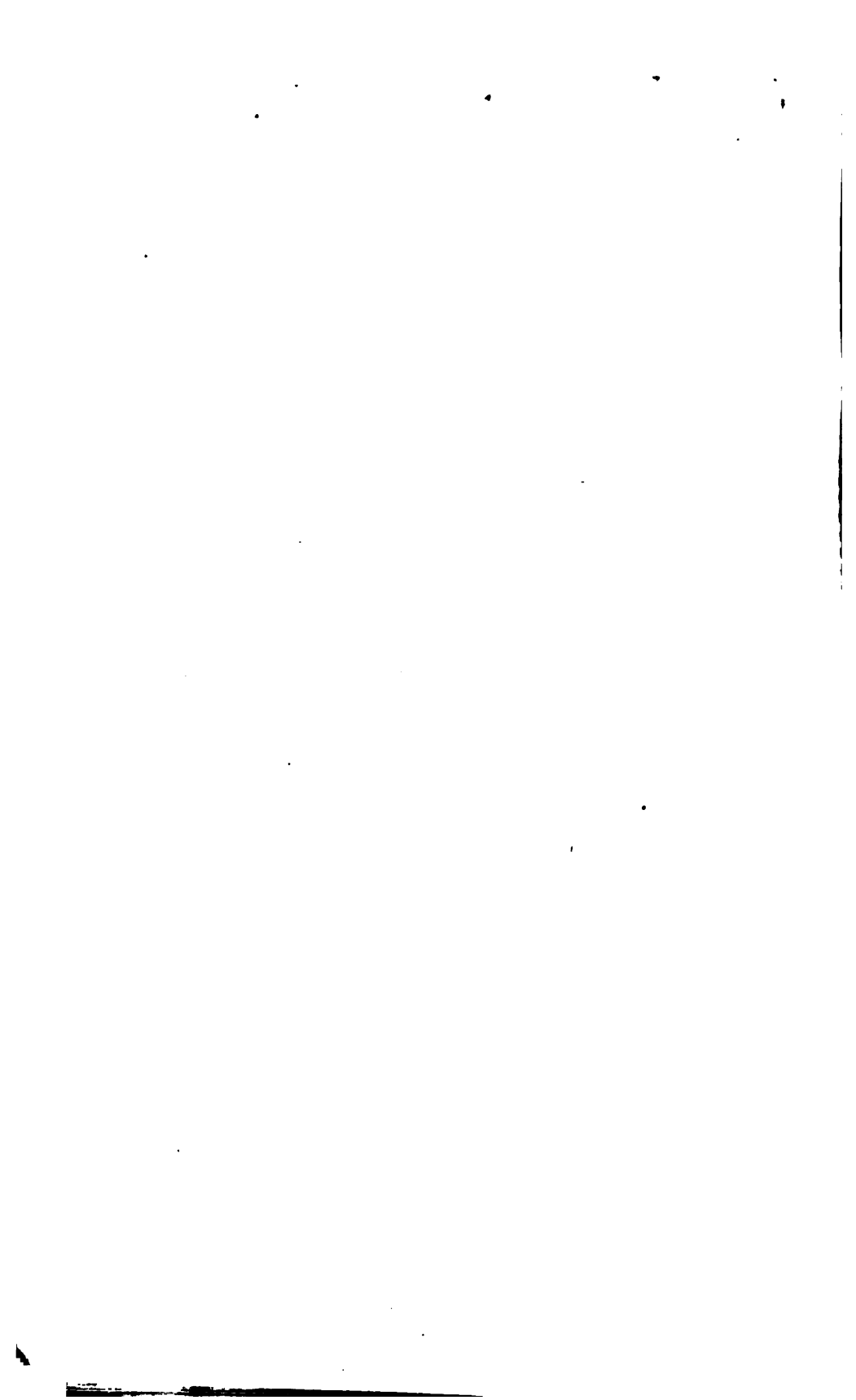
ILCOTE OF SILCOTES.

BY
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SILCOTE OF SILCOTES.

CHAPTER I.

MOONLIGHT.

How wonderfully similar are all children to one another when asleep! The same rounded, half-med features, the same gently closed eyelids, the same slightly parted mouth, are common alike to high and low, to good and bad, before passion or recreation has begun to draw those harder and more decided lines which sleep cannot obliterate, and which only pass away when once the first calm look of death is gone, and dust returns to dust. No such lines mar or alter the face of a sleeping child, or give a clew to the daily history of the soul within. Look from young Seymour the lord to young Dick the shepherd-boy. Look at the mendacious and fierce-tempered Johnny, destined to break your heart and ruin you, lying with his arm round the neck of his gentle, high-souled brother Georgy, they are all very nearly alike.

But awake them; see how the soul, still off its guard, strays the truth in eye, in mouth, nay, even in gesture. Well was the wise Mrs. Chisholm accustomed to say that the time to judge of a girl's character was when she was first awake. Cannot we conceive of these four ideal children, that they would betray something to a close observer as their consciousness of the real world returned to them? Would not the little nobleman have a calm look upon his face,—a look careless, because he had never known care? Would not some signs of weariness and dissatisfaction show themselves on the face of the shepherd-boy, when he first found that the pleasant dreams of the cake and of the fine new clothes were unreal, but that the bleak, wild morning, the hard, cold boot to be thrust on stockingless feet, and the poor, dry bread, were most unmistakably real; while Johnny will wake with a scowl, and Georgy with a smile.

There lay a boy once in a very poor little bed, close under the thatch of a very poor little cottage, fast asleep and dreaming. At a certain time he moved slightly; in perhaps less than a second more he had raised himself in his bed, and sat there perfectly still, perfectly silent, looking and listening with the intenseness of a beautiful, bright-eyed fox.

That is to say, that intense, keen, vivid curiosity was the first, instantaneous expression which fixed itself on his face at the very moment of his waking. In a very few moments more those very facile features were expressive of intelligence and satisfaction in the highest degree. A minute had not gone by when, with all the subtle dexterity, the silence, and

the rapid, snake-like motion of that most beautiful animal to which we have before compared him, he had slid from his bed and stood before the door of his room, with half-opened hands, bent head, and slightly parted lips, listening with the whole strength of his brave little heart and his keen brain.

There was no need for him to open his crazy old door; the great hole, into which you had to thrust your finger when you raised the latch, was quite big enough for him not only to hear, but also to see, everything which went on below.

His mother stood below at the front door of the cottage, in the moonlight, talking with a man he knew well,—Somes, the head-keeper. It could not be very late, for she had not been up stairs; nor very early, for he could hear his father hurriedly dressing in the room where he slept,—a room opposite his mother's; and almost immediately he went down and joined the keeper, and the two men passed away into the forest, leaving the woman still standing at the door.

Our listener dressed himself with all the rapidity possible, for he knew that the moment had come for realizing one of the great wishes of his short life. His mother still stood in the doorway, and she would certainly prevent his going out, while, if he waited till she came up stairs again, he might lose his father's tracks. The bavin-pile was close under his window; he opened the window, and, dropping on the fagots, clambered down, and, listening for one instant, with his head near the ground, he sped away after the faint rustling footsteps of his father and the keeper.

He knew what had happened well enough. The poachers from Newley were in the wood again, and their good friend, the head-keeper, had aroused his father to assist him. The poachers were a very determined gang, with a most expensive set of nets, which some said had cost fifty pounds, and would most certainly fight. On the other hand, the gentlemen, the keepers, and some of the hinds were exasperated beyond measure against this very gang. The coverts were poor and bare, and the pheasants, every one of them, cost ten to fifteen shillings by the time they were killed. Eighteen months before a keeper had been shot dead. The previous November a young watcher had been kicked about the head until he was reduced to a state of lifelong imbecility, varied by occasional epileptic fits of the most terrible character, for trying to follow and identify some men who were killing pheasants; and now the same lot had paid them another visit, and were netting rabbits. There was no doubt there would be a grand, final fight on this very night. On

one side the hall party, composed of gentlemen, servants, and laborers, armed only with sticks; on the other, a desperate gang of ruffians from the low waterside streets of Newley.* James was determined at all hazards to see this battle, and his plan was to overtake his father, when it was too late to be sent back.

The beech forest was blazing in the glory of the August moon. The ground, golden all the year round, by daylight, with fallen leaves, was now a carpet of black purple velvet, with an irregular pattern of gleaming white satin, wherever the moonbeams fell through to the earth. The overarching boughs had lost the rich, warm color which they showed in the sunlight, and were a mere undefined canopy of green and silver. The wood was as clear of undergrowth as a Canadian forest, and as level as a lawn; so it was easy enough for the boy to keep sight of the party he was pursuing, and yet to keep at a safe distance.

For on second thoughts he did not care to join them too quickly. There were three or four gentlemen among them, and James was afraid of gentlemen. He would hardly have gone so far as to say that he disliked them, and would probably have pleaded that he had seen so little of them; but one thing was certain,—he would sooner have their room than their company; and so he shuffled along with half-laced boots, far enough in the rear to avoid any great chance of detection.

There were eight of the party before him, holding steadily and silently through the wood in a line, and he knew some of them. Head-keeper Somes was a fine man, who stepped along from light to shade with wonderful elasticity and determination. His father came next to the head-keeper, and his father was a finer man still, broader over the shoulders, and an inch taller; but his father did not walk with the elasticity and grace of the gamekeeper: forty years, in heavy boots, among sticky clay fallows, had taken the elasticity out of his legs, and they seemed to drag somewhat; nevertheless that dearly-loved figure was a very majestic one, or seemed so until the slinking little man noticed the next one.

The next one, the one who walked beside his father, was one of those dreaded gentlemen. A man (as he got to know afterwards) in evening dress, but bareheaded, so that the boy could see the moonlight gleaming on the short, well-tended curls, which clustered on a head like a prize-fighter's. This man was half a head taller than his father, and the biggest and broadest man he had ever seen. It was not this fact that attracted him so much; it was the man's gait, so springy, so rapid, so reckless, and yet so powerful. He carried no stick, and yet seemed to be the most eager for the fray, for he was always outwalking the others by a little, and then with an impatient look right and left coming back into the line again. James had never seen anything like this gentleman before, and at once set it down with himself that he must be Lord Brumby, lord-lieutenant

* Professional poachers are mainly town's-folks; and not generally, if you look merely at their rental, of the lowest (!) class. There are a good sprinkling of ten, and even twenty pounders, among them. I knew one well, the rent for whose premises could not have been less than fifty, and was probably sixty pounds. He was not, I believe, the head of the profession, but was well known in it. He was fond of politics, fonder still of electioneering, a staunch and sound Whig. I remember well his driving the "buff" drag, to and from the hustings in either '44 or '45. If I were to mention his trade, hundreds would recognize him at once.

of that county, ultimate master of all souls and bodies in those parts, of whom he had dimly heard. Not very long afterwards he saw my Lord Brumby on a state occasion (which happened also to be a wet-day) in his lieutenant's uniform. It was not a man at all. The lord-lieutenant was a little man of seventy, with a face like a fish, but red. Once afterwards James saw a fish like Lord Brumby, and asked the name of it; it was a red goby, they told him. Possibly it was better for that particular county that kind old Lord Brumby was not lieutenant of it, and not that reckless, hurling Lord Silcote of Silcotes, whom the boy was following.

The gentleman will fight for what costs him much; and the keeper feels a natural animosity towards a man who he knows will kick or beat senseless on the first opportunity; and the boy, though in some cases not guiltless himself, is disposed towards the gentleman, whose wife is always doing him small kindnesses, and has no quarrel with the town ruffian. The whole party on one side of the law are perfectly ready for a fight; the other side also are far from unwilling; they are firebrands mostly, which gives them the coming gunpowder; they are not easily recognized; they come of a ruffianly breed who love fighting; moreover, their nets are worth fighting for. It will be difficult to account for the extreme determination of these encounters, if one did not remember the things.

Such a battle royal was coming off immediately as James well knew, and in all probability that would be shed. The party walked as silently as possible, and he could see that they were coming to a break in the wood, to a little open piece of upland meadow, walled round on all sides by the forest. There he guessed the poachers would be at work, and he was right.

It came all in a moment. The challenge came from the poachers. "Hold off, or," &c., &c. It was answered by Tom Silcote, who stepped out into the open, and said loudly, but quietly enough, "Can you give us this net here. You all know me. Give us hold of it. I must have it."

The poachers, who had run together, seemed as if they did know him. They seemed to hesitate, and to be inclined for falling back, when the eldest of them all ran suddenly forward, weaponless as alone, sprang on Thomas Silcote, and cried, "Know you? I know you, and I'll have your false heart's blood this night."

The instant the two champions closed, the fight became general. James saw that the fight between Mr. Silcote and the tall poacher, whom he knew perfectly well (the keeper of a beer-house, the Black Bull, in Water Street, Newley), was turning a terrible wrestle. He minded that no man but ran close in, to be near his father.

Two of the poachers had singled him out, and were attacking him. His father fought stoutly, and well, but very clumsily. Whenever he managed to hit either of his assailants with his stick, the blow seemed to tell, but he only got a blow in once in a way. In a very few minutes he found only one enemy before him, and he, getting maddened, rushed in and cut him down with a blow of his stick, and at the same moment, was felled with a blow from behind, given by the other ruffian, who had passed behind him.

James saw his father go hurtling heavily over, and the man who had knocked him down making

towards him. James ran too. The poacher had got his heavy iron-shod boot raised to kick the defenceless man behind the ear, when his legs were seized by some one to him invisible, and he was thrown forcibly on his back, and, before he knew where he was, he felt two tiny, but vigorous, little fists inside his collar, and found that he was rolling over and over in the tight clutches of a little boy, running a very fair chance of being throttled and captured.

They must have struggled together for minutes, these two; the man cursing and threatening, the boy only ejaculating at intervals. "I'll hold 'ee, John Reveson, I'll hold 'ee!" for the man had time to find that his comrades were beaten and in full retreat, before he, not being an absolute fiend, resorted to the last expedient for freeing himself. He had spared the boy hitherto, — he had boys of his own; but the gentlemen were winning; murder might have been done by one of his own party, which would make him an accomplice; and the boy had recognized him, and let him know it. There was only one way: he must escape, and the boy must be left in such a state that his evidence was worthless. He used his fists at last, and beat the boy about the head till he was insensible; then he rose and sped away.

It was not very long before poor James came to himself, but he was very much hurt, and very dizzy, and sick. The poachers were gone, he found out afterwards, the nets taken, and many of them (who got their deserts) identified. He was in the arms of the head gamekeeper, who was washing his head, with a wet handkerchief. The others, with the exception of his father, all stood round him, and the first person he recognized was the gigantic Tom Silcote, his white tie, looking down on him. He, too, was the first who spoke.

"This is a fine fellow! this is a deuced fine boy! How did he get bred in these parts? He has got the pluck of a London street boy."

The poacher's fists had knocked a great deal out of James's head, possibly, but not the idea that Tom Silcote was lord-lieutenant of the county. So he asked, faintly, —

"Please, my lord, how's father?"

"Father's seriously hurt, if that is your father. Now tell me, my man, the name of the fellow you got down just now. You know him, you know, for I heard you speaking to him."

"I won't, my lord."

"But you ought to."

"I won't tell on him or no man, my lord, not for any man. When I gets as big as father I'll give he cause for to know it. But I won't tell, not on no man."

"I like this," said Tom Silcote. "There is a spice of the devil here. Whose boy is this?"

"James Sugden's," said the immovable keeper.

"Give me the boy," said Tom Silcote. "I will carry him to the hall. See Sugden home and send for the doctor."

"The boy is as near his own home as he is to the hall, Master Thomas," said the keeper. "He is more used to it; and his mother will fret. These brats like the home where they have been bred best."

"Give me the boy, now, and no more of your jaw. I am going to take the boy home with me. Go and tell his mother who has got him, and where he is gone. Good night all. Thanks for your pluck."

CHAPTER II.

FIRELIGHT.

JAMES was transferred from the arms of the head-keeper to those of his friend the lord-lieutenant, and found himself being carried rapidly on through the beech forest — every tree of which he knew — towards the hall. He was, so to speak, alone with this great gentleman; for, although they were followed by a coachman, two grooms, a country-bred footman, and page, these good gentlemen kept behind, noisily recounting their deeds of valor, which, to do them justice, were anything but inconsiderable.

James would have lain much more comfortable if he could have kept his bitterly aching head on the lord-lieutenant's shoulder. But that gentleman kept raising it so that he could look at his face, which he did with great curiosity and amusement. At last he said, —

"You are a quaint little rascal, — a most plucky little dog. I am going to take you to Queer Hall, do you hear, and get you mended."

He said this so good-naturedly that James was encouraged to say, —

"Please, my lord, I'd sooner go and see after father."

"Yes, but you ain't going, don't you see," replied his friend, "which makes all the difference."

Soon the forest opened into glades, though it still loomed dark all around. Now his bearer got over some iron hurdles, and they were passing through flower-beds, and then Tom Silcote began kicking at a door. When he ceased, James became aware of more animal life than their own; they were surrounded by five or six bloodhounds, the famous bloodhounds of Silcotes, at whose baying, far heard through the forest, the woodland children gathering flowers or seeking bird-nests were used to raise their scared eyes and run homewards towards their mothers, wailing, — the more heavy-footed of the frightened little trots being dragged along by their braver sisters, — all their precious flowers scattered and lost in the hurry and terror of their flight. James knew that these dim, wild, beast-like figures, which were crowding silently around them, were the celebrated and terrible hounds, heard of by all, seen by few, the keeping of which was reported to be one of the darkest fancies in the Squire's darkened mind. James's courage utterly gave way; he clutched Mr. Silcote round the neck, and did what he had not done for four years before, — cried out for his mother.

"Quiet! you little fool," said his friend. "If you scream out like that, the dogs will be on us, and I can't save you. Open the door here, you asses."

The boy was quiet, but horribly frightened. He heard one of the party in the rear cry out: "Look out here! I'm blowed if the Squire has n't let the dogs loose. It's too bad." And another: "Stand close together! Mr. Tom, call they dogs in! D'y'e hear, sir? call they dogs in!"

But the door was opened, and he and the man who carried him passed into a large and dimly-lighted hall with the terrible dogs all around them, and the door was shut behind. Then James was set down before a great wood-fire, with the dogs crowding against him, gazing at the blaze with their sleepy eyes, and now and then those of them who were nearest to him reaching their foolish, beautiful heads up and licking his face. He shrunk at first, but, finding they were kind, got his arm round the neck of the near-

est monster, who seemed quite contented. The night had grown chill, and he had almost forgotten his bruised and aching head in the sensation of cold; so he enjoyed the fire, very stupidly, not caring who was in the room, or what they were saying.

The first piece of conversation which reached his inner sense was this, — it came as he guessed, and immediately afterwards knew, from the mouth of a little girl. And its sound was like the chiming of silver bells.

"These dogs, you understand, are reindeer."

"That is totally impossible," said another voice, also a girl's, nearly as pretty, but very decided. "If they are reindeer, we shall have to kill them, and drink their blood as an antiscorbutic; and you are hardly prepared for that."

"Let them be bears," said a boy's voice very like the second girl's, — a voice he liked very much.

"In which case," said the determined girl's voice, "we should have to kill them in self-defence, if for no other reason. And I dislike the flesh of the Arctic bear; they are Esquimaux dogs, and must drag our sledges. And their harness must be made with hemp, or they will eat it. You are very stupid to-night, Reggy."

"They are reindeer, I tell you," said the girl with the silvery voice; "they could not be anything else. We have so much pemmican and things in store that we don't want them, but make them draw our sledges."

"None of the searching party did that," said the strong girl's voice; "they used dogs. These dogs are too big, certainly, and, besides, I am afraid of them. But they must be dogs."

"If they are not reindeer I shall not play," said she of the clear voice. "I am not going to winter at Beechey Island, unless they are reindeer. The snow-hut belongs to me; I stole the hearth-rugs and shawls and things to make it. Law! look at that boy before the fire. My dear, this is an Esquimaux from off the ice in Ross's Straits, and he brings us intelligence of the expedition from Back's Fish River."

"It's only a common boy come in from the poaching expedition," said the stronger voice, "and a very dirty one too."

This was not quite so true as the remarks generally made by this very downright young lady. James was *not* dirty, though rather battered.

"My love, it's an Esquimaux. He is a very stupid boy; he ought to lie down on his stomach on the ice and blow like a seal to attract our attention, instead of gazing at the fire. Reggy, you must be Petersen the interpreter. Let us trade with that boy. 'Kammik toomee! Kamirik toomee!' interpret for us, Petersen; hold up a needle."

CHAPTER III.

THREE OF THE FAMILY.

THUS adjured, James, dropping the head of the bloodhound which he held in his hand, turned round. The party of young people who had been talking so freely about him saw before them a little common boy, with a smock-frock, whose face was fearfully swollen and disfigured with blood. Their babble and their play were stopped at once, by seeing a figure more tragical and more repulsive than they had reckoned on. James, on his part, saw before him three children. The first which arrested his eye was a stout, strongly-built girl of about twelve, with handsome, *very* handsome, but rather coarse

features, a very full complexion, and dark-blue eyes steady and strong as two sea-beacons: she was tallest as well as the strongest and boldest-looking of the three. Next he saw a blonde, babyish-looking fairy, likewise blue-eyed, with her long golden hair falling about her shoulders in cascades, — that beautiful creature he had ever looked on, but indescribable, for the simple reason that there was nothing to describe about her, except a general beauty, which was not here nor there, but everywhere. And, lastly, this group of three was up by a pale and sickly-looking boy, who, pale and unhealthy as he looked, was evidently, even James's untrained eyes, the brother of the red-faced girl he had noticed first.

It was not difficult for James to connect the voices he had heard with the three children before him. The golden-haired fairy was the girl who had done the principal part of the talking. The stout, strong girl, she of the determined eye, was the girl who had made objections to the general programme of their play, and the pale-faced boy was the owner of the voice he had liked so much. The boy who had said that the dogs must represent bears.

James, for the first time in his life, had the pleasure of throwing the whole of a company (very much interested on this occasion) into confusion. So far from acting Esquimaux, and being traded with, he turned his battered face on them, and said in good English, —

"I know what you are aiming at. But I can't play a Esquimaux to-night. I know all about the Great Fish River, and the pemmican, and the Magnet Pole is in Boothia Felix. I'd willingly play with you. I'd be a bear, and come growling round the hut smelling the seal-blubber; or I'd be the great brown jaguar, bigger than the biggest Bengal tiger, and I'd lie under the palm-tree, and work my claws, and you should be Humboldt, picking off the alligators, and not noticing me: or I'd be Villeneuve's Gravina, or Soult, or any of that lot short of Balaclava, and you should be Lord Nelson or Lord Blücher. But I can't play to-night. I want to be took home to mother, and put to bed."

"My love," said Dora, the bright-haired first of the other two, "this boy is no Esquimaux. He is one of the lost expedition."

"Don't be silly, Dora," said Anne, the tall, strong girl. "The boy has been badly beaten by the poachers, and should be looked after."

"Why don't you go and look after him?" demanded Dora.

"Because," said Anne, "I am afraid of those dogs which are all round him. Ah! you need not turn up your nose, for you are a regular coward. You are afraid of thunder and lightning; you are afraid of frogs; you are afraid of old Mrs. Halfacre, because the Princess says she is a witch; you are afraid of walking through stinging nettles; and you cry when you go through a lock. I am afraid of those dogs, and so is Reggy. I can't think why grandpa keeps such a lot of brutes about the place."

"You have no business to wonder. Grandpa does as he chooses. And I am not afraid of frogs. I am only afraid of toads, which spit venom at you. You are such a cockney, you don't know a toad from a frog. This is a much better place than Lancaster Square."

"That's true enough," said Anne; "but that will never stop my speaking my mind, not to grandpa himself, leave alone you. If you are really not

id of those dogs, make yourself useful. Get away from the boy, and let me get at him." "I am not afraid of the dogs," said Dora. "But don't you call the boy out from among them, if want him?"

This was an excellent suggestion, and Anne had thought of that solution so soon as the quickened Dora. She would have acted on Dora's advice doubtless, had not the low growl of a voice they saw well silenced all the children, and made them ire into a corner, preparatory to skulking off to free regions above stairs as soon as they were efficiently unobserved, while James was still left standing before the fire among the dogs. Three faces came out of the darkness into the light of the fire, and two candlesticks on the mantel-piece, towards him; the faces of three men.

The first, that of the gigantic gentleman who had married him that night, — a handsome face, with black moustache on it, and very bold, wild, dark eyes; not a remarkable face in any way, if you except its commonplace beauty. The mouth belonged to that face I never saw, and it is very difficult to guess at a mouth under a moustache; but the reckless ease of every pose the man made would tell one almost as much of the man's character as his mouth. The next face the boy saw was very different, and the moment he looked on it, he knew that he was looking on "the Dark Squire" at a nearer distance than he had ever looked before.

He had seen the Squire before, often and often; but he had never dared to look at Dark Silcote any more than he had dared to look at the lightning which shattered the ash-tree close to him, and killed two of the sheep he was minding, — sheep not so much frightened as their shepherd; or than he would have dared to look at any of the numerous ghosts with which rustic imagination had peopled the great beech forest of Boisey. Lightning, ghosts, and the Dark Squire were the sort of things he let go by with a touch of the cap, as necessary evils; right, of course, because they were there, but which, in sceptical moments, he wished were anywhere else. He now saw the Dark Squire close to him, in the most careless manner, and looked at him closely; for the dull, stupid aching, left by the poacher's fist, made him careless about fifty dark squires. Let us see the Squire with him.

A very broad man, of great physical power still, though nearly sixty; with a finely shaped head (was it narrow? perhaps it was narrow), covered with close-cut grizzled hair; possibly longer in proportion to its breadth than it need have been. Perfect features, perfect complexion, the face of the handsomest man, for his time of life, that one is likely to meet with. There were two great faults in it: one of natural formation, the other of acquired habit. The eyes were set too deep under those heavy black eyebrows, which had refused to grow gray with the hair, and were set too close together; and there was a continual look of suspicion about the whole face which I cannot describe, and which it is rather in the way of Mr. Calderon to paint.

Such a man was the terrible Squire. Beside him stood the third gentleman, with his hand laid on the Squire's shoulder, the fingers of which hand were carelessly playing a tune on the Squire's coat. There was one man in the world, then, to whom this fearful old man was not terrible, — apparently one, and stranger still, this one a parson. Silcote openly and offensively severed himself from the Church and from any form of faith years and years

before; his infidelity, nay, some said his open profanity, was notorious; but here was a clergyman (with rather a High Church cut waistcoat, too), coolly playing a tune on his shoulder.

And not a very remarkable-looking man either. Not very handsome, or very tall, with bold eyes like his brother's, face very thin and very pale, and looking extremely young; you would have said, at first sight, that he was a B.A. in deacon's orders at the very furthest. But if you looked at him longer, and heard him speak a few times, you altered your opinion. He still looked young; there was not a down on his pale face; but there was a steadiness of eye, a quiet easiness of motion, as of one who had been accustomed to use his limbs in decent moderation for some time; a perfectly cool self-possession in his manner; nay, more than that, a degree of self-consciousness and a tendency to dictate, as of a man who has lived among clever men, and has been accustomed to wit as well as to argument, which in society might be considered almost offensive; a curl of the mouth which readily expanded into a short laugh. All these little traits made you, after you had given up your first B.A. deacon's orders theory, begin to think about all the new young schoolmasters you had seen lately, and put him down for a second or third master at Cheltenham or Marlborough. You were wrong in both guesses. He was the youngest tutor at Balliol.

Not only the youngest, but by common consent, both of the undergraduates, and such of the fellows as had not forgotten the slang of former years, the "cheekiest" or "cookiest." The very first time he appeared in the common room he showed his metal by his reckless, honest audacity, his utter carelessness of university rank or *prestige*, and his amazing brilliancy in conversation: which last quality means, as I take it, letting every man talk his best on his best subjects, but assisting him where he gets weak, if you can. Arthur Silcote was, undoubtedly, a success in the common room at Balliol, in spite of what some men might call his self-sufficient impudence. The oldest, and wisest of the fellows seduced him out of that same common room that night, and got Arthur to smoke a cigar with him while they walked up and down in front of Magdalen Hall and All Souls, with all the mighty cliffs of stone around them.

"Silcote," said the elder fellow, "will you tell me this: How is it that you, as genial, kind-hearted, well-conditioned a man as ever breathed, are not popular with the undergraduates? Nay, more, why are you so very unpopular?"

"You hit me hard. I am very clever, am I not? but I can't find that out. Have you? God knows I would do anything to bid for their popularity."

"Have I found it out? no, I have seen it for the last three years. You ask me if you are clever. I answer, you are one of the cleverest men I ever saw; so clever (pause not long enough to be offensive) that your cleverness has become a vice. You are too impatient to bear with men, not to say boys, less clever than yourself. You cannot 'suffer fools gladly,' my boy. You are impatient and scornful of all ignorance which is relatively greater than your own ignorance; and your own ignorance, like that of all men of three-and-twenty, is very great. You have made a success to-night. Why? because you were afraid of us; you had not time to find out our weak points. You would become as unpopular in the common room as you are among the undergraduates, if you were left alone. Silcote, you must learn

to be tender, ay, and to *respect*, in a way, ignorance, as you do childhood and womanhood, weakness in every form. What is the extent of the visible horizon, Silcote, at 1,500 feet above the level of the sea?" Silcote did not know.

"No more do I. But the eighteenth wrangler at Cambridge would tell us, I don't doubt. You are very clever, and for a lad know a good deal. But put your knowledge against Humboldt's, and where are you? Put your knowledge—I speak solemnly, as I feel—against the Almighty's, and where are you then, poor child? Suppose he treated your ignorance and mine with the same petulant impatience you treat the ignorance of men but little your inferiors, where should we be?"

"You need say no more," said Arthur Silcote.

"Only in apology," continued the other. "I risked saying this much to you, because I have a very great admiration for you, and because I saw in you the germs of that priggishness (you know what I mean) which is one of the curses of this time and this place developing in you. Cure this. Get rid of that miserable habit of being impatient of other men's weak points as though you had none of your own, and you will be a good man. Encourage and develop it, and your influence over other men is gone. The sole result of your sharp-tongued attacks on other men's opinions in the Union and elsewhere has been to make you disliked and distrusted. Give over this trick. It is a very silly one. No man with this trick (save one, perhaps) ever got any high influence in the world. In the House this is called temper; and, young and foolish as you are, you are old enough to know how utterly a charge of bad temper ruins a man's influence there."

CHAPTER IV.

A FOURTH.

THE Squire spoke first. "So this is the boy that you, Tom, by that fellow-feeling which exists among all fools, have whisked away from his mother, and brought here to show me. I don't know which of you is the greatest fool, upon my word,—you for bringing him, or the boy for coming. Don't you know I hate children? What have you done it for? If the boy has any claim on you, it was not correct, sir, to bring him here at all."

"I don't so much as know the boy's name," said Captain Silcote. "I took a fancy to his courage and determination, and brought him home to see if you could be got to do something for him. Make him a page, or a stable-boy, or something."

"Because he fights with desperate ferocity, is well acquainted with at least one notorious poacher, and refuses to have him brought to justice. Bien!"

"O, if you are going to put it *your* way, of course I give up. I was a fool to have brought him here, and to *you*. Here, come with me, boy, and we will away out of this."

The Squire laughed. "Arthur," he said, "will you be so good, on this occasion, as on many others, to relieve me from the consequences of your brother's folly, and take care of the child?"

"I will take care of the child, certainly; but I will not acknowledge Tom's folly. Tom did kindly and well in bringing the boy home. And don't scold him to-day, the first day we have had him for so long."

"He don't care," growled Captain Silcote. "If I had been away six years instead of six months, it would be just the same."

"You only come back when you want your debts paid."

"Father! father! Tom!" said Arthur, and some effect, for they ceased what would soon have grown into a very disagreeable wrangle, and took the boy kindly by the hand, and was grateful him away, when the arrival of another party arrested their departure, and aroused the astonishment to a high degree.

The hall was partly dark, and now there came towards them a figure whose dress was darker than the darkness itself. Unutterably black came to its breast, and there flamed a brilliant above that the shape of a pale human face. It advanced majestically, and was for a few moments extremely puzzling and somewhat alarming before it came into the light, and James saw after all, it was not a black ghost, but only a tall, pale lady, dressed in a black velvet gown, with a very large diamond cross on her bosom. He may supplement his observation by adding, the great sweep of coal-black velvet and the dark cross were topped by a very pale, amiable but full, and exceedingly foolish face,—that the whole figure at last stood out in the light, very tall, very handsome, and seemed to understand the putting on of clothes, and the array of herself into attitudes, without running into the extreme of theatrical posing, better than the majority of women one has seen before or since. That is all I have to say about her at present, and indeed there is little more to say. Her story must tell their own story.

Arthur saw her first, and called his father's attention to her presence. "The Princess of Castlereagh, father," he said, and the Squire turned. The result was a "hip" bow from the Squire, and a splendid graceful, sweeping courtesy from the Princess, accompanied by a most pleasant smile.

"That was a beautiful courtesy, Princess," began the Squire. "Not too much backing about it. It always remains on your former ground in courtesy: don't take one pace to the rear when you do it, as you know. Tread on some one's toes and spoil the effect, eh? I remember when I was first presented to old Lady Wildmore, at the Basingstoke ball. It was so taken aback at meeting an attorney's son, it stood on her good manners to such an extent, that she made the lowest courtesy ever known, and making it backed into the fireplace, and in rising brought her old head crack up under the mantelpiece. Well, and where the dooce have you been? Why didn't you come down to supper? What the last news in the supernatural line? Afraid of the dinner-table's saying anything unpleasant, eh?"

"No," said the Princess, with a charming laugh. "I was not at all afraid of the table's talking, unless it would have rapped out my age. If any table in the house were to betray that, I should take to taking turning on that table, and have the tables turned on it by turning it out of the house." She uttered this piece of simple nonsense so neatly, and with such an air of having said something uncommonly like Theodore Hook, that Arthur Silcote stood in his place for a minute or two, believing that the woman had rather a pretty wit.

"There she goes," said the Squire. "Table-turning, turn the tables: turn the words over and over as often as you can manage, and you'll have a reputation for wit. Archy, how many muddly puns can you make out of three selected words by your permutations and combinations, you know—hang it!"

forgot I sent you to Oxford; a Cambridge man had told me. I don't find fault with you, my. But what a monstrous thing is this wit, this ing on words, which you young fellows admire — (I will not be quiet, Archy, — she began it.) Why, is it not the lowest effort of the human intellect? though a man is better remembered for his wit with words than for anything else in these golden times. She comes here to pun me down, does she?"

"Father, you will talk yourself into a passion." Look at her dress, too. Her velvet and diamonds. Seven and twenty pounds for that dress, erected expressly to meet her own nephew at dinner, and show off her beauty and her wit to him, was only thinking that, if he had known how silly I would have been, he would not have kept back those other bills, after he had given his word that he had told me of every penny. Do you wince, mamma? The same child, girl, woman, for fifty years." It all went over her head without touching her. She only said, in her sweetest manner, "Silcote, my dear, you are in one of your scolding moods; and hold away. You know my temper by this time. It is there is a boy here who has been hurt by the teachers, of whom the children have told me, who must be attended to. I have only come down for that boy. Let me have him."

"Where are the children?" asked Silcote, half hamed.

"In Boothia Felix, as I understood them," said the Princess. "I proposed bed to them, but they refused it with scorn. It appears that they are laying a game, and have erected Esquimaux-huts in the north gallery, in which they propose to sleep, and, in fact, are sleeping. I put it that the explorers always went to bed when they got back to civilization. The children have answered that they are still in the arctic regions. I would not interfere with them on any account. Give me, however, this boy, and let me see to him. I will make it a personal favor to myself if the servants will see after him. Thank you, Arthur. Come along, my dear." And so she went off with James.

"Did you ever see such a fool as that woman?" asked the Squire, as soon as she was gone. "She pretends to take care of the house, and she has now let all those children go up and bivouac in the north gallery. They will catch their deaths. Arthur, go and see after them."

The Squire went, and the brothers were left alone together. "Does he often fly at her now?" asked the eldest.

"More and more seldom as time gets on."

"She never gives it him back again, does she?"

"Never, even at the worst of times. She never replies, except in the most good-humored manner, with a face covered with smiles. And she must feel it sometimes, you know."

"They are a curious pair," said the elder. "I don't believe they could do without one another now."

CHAPTER V.

MISS RAYLOCK COMES TO OUR ASSISTANCE.

OLD Miss Raylock (many have forgotten her name, — writers get soon forgotten, unless they are very first-class) wrote three or four very charming, terse, and carefully thought-out stories, a long time ago, at a time when the demand for such tales was nearly as great as now, and when the supply was

deficient. They were merely honest tales about social life in its ordinary aspects, but told with a charm and a grace which I could, if I dared, compare with Miss Austen or Mrs. Gaskell. It is to the credit of the time in which she wrote those stories (not far from 1820, rather a Gilbert Gurney, Tom and Jerry time, on the whole) to be able to say that they sold well, and that she came to live in our village, with nearly three thousand pounds added to her previously slender fortune. She is, therefore, not only nearly the oldest neighbor we have, but is also a very old lady. She is as well able to write now as ever she was. We have urged her to do so; but she steadily refuses. She replies always: No, my dear, I had something to say forty years ago, and I said it, and, what is more, my dear, they listened to me. I have nothing particular to say now, and so I shall remain silent. My charming style? Certainly, mine was a charming style. But mere style don't warrant a man or woman in writing, if they have nothing to say. But I have something to say! Very likely, but I see George Eliot, and Mrs. Gaskell saying all I have got to say, and a deal more, in a far better style than mine. I'll write no more, please. Talk? O, I'll talk to you as long as you like. An old woman is only left alive to talk: she will do less mischief in that way than she would if she wrote after living out of the world as long as I have. Will I gossip? Certainly; there is nothing I am fonder of. You must agree to leave the room, however, if you hear me speaking ill of any one. Will I tell you about Squire Silcote? Certainly. I will tell you all the good I know of him. But if I get on the subject of the Princess Castelnovo, stop me, or my petulant old tongue will make me say things about her which I shall be very sorry for afterwards. No, no! don't encourage me to talk about that poor woman. I have nothing to forgive, but — but she irritates me. And that is so very wrong, — a woman who would give, and who has given, the gown off her back, and the shoes off her feet, for sheer kindly honest good-will. I ought to be ashamed of myself. Now, dear, what do you want to know about Harry Silcote? Everything?

Well, the father of the present Squire Harry was a great country attorney, agent for several very great houses, as his father had been before him, and was, of course, a very wealthy man. The largest of his agencies, or what you call them, was, however, that of Sir George Denby's estate. You can anticipate me here. All the world knows about the four Miss Denbys. The estate was left to the eldest, who married Lord Ballyroundtower, who gambled away the whole sixty thousand a year, interest, principal, country houses, timber, everything but the bare land, in ten years, and left her a penniless woman, dependent on her three sisters. Silcote's father acted as an honest man from beginning to end of the dreadful business; used his influence with Sir George Denby to prevent the match, without avail; to have reasonable settlements made, not to much purpose; and, after his death, did all he could to stay her infatuation for one of the most worthless men who ever lived.

The story is too well known to dwell on. He debauched away a million or more of her money, and at his death left his countess without a farthing. Old Silcote was not any the richer for the ruin. He loved Lady Ballyroundtower and her family, and he was probably the only honest man whom the Earl saw in the way of money matters during those wild ten years. I glance over this stale old story

only to show that the present Squire's money was honestly come by, for folks are superstitious about here, and that ill-gotten money won't wear. Fudge! a lawyer's money is as honestly got as a novelist's, any day.

You and the world know the story I have been telling you quite well, but every one who calls Sir George Denby a fool does not know that he left three other daughters with thirty thousand pounds apiece. Quiet ladies, quite as plain in appearance, quite as gentle, as good, and as affectionate as that most ill-used and unfortunate lady, but a little more wise. Certain little brown ladies of doubtful age, three in number, used for some time to be found in the world behind doors, or going down to support a step at a time, one behind the other, without any one with them; encouraging one another with little quack-like notes, as of little ducks encouraging one another to take the water: or in the crushroom of the opera in a difficulty about their carriage, waiting, like three timid little quails, until that terrifying bellow of "Miss Denby's carriage," should shock the ear of night in the Haymarket, and then, trotting out like three frightened little sand-pipers, to hide their heads from the dreadful crowd of eyes under the lights. I have not been in the world lately, but they tell me that a woman is safe from insult anywhere now. It was not always so then. There were young fellows in those days who would either have accosted those three ladies, or, if they were not pretty enough, jeered at them. But, not to ramble, these three little brown ladies were the three Miss Denbys, following their sister, the Countess, into society, and not liking it at all, but wishing they were back at Denby among the poor and the schools.

They got known. The Earl's name was Tom, and they got known in society as Tom's sisters-in-law. One day somewhere, some one said that Tom's youngest sister-in-law had married a fellow in the country. It was perfectly true, as are not all things which are said in society. Being out of society as I am, and yet being so intimate with my dear neighbors, who are in society, I hear all the latest news from the world. But it seems to me always all wrong. It seems to me that the girls always come and contradict their own intelligence in less than a week. I beg your pardon. Yes. It was true that the youngest Miss Denby married a clergyman, and had a little girl. And all their property being secured, this little girl was the heiress of ninety thousand pounds, and Harry Silcote married her, and there never would have been any trouble between them if it had not been for the Princess; at least I always connected it with her.

That is how Harry almost doubled the already great fortune of his father. The arrangement was the most natural in the world. For many years his father had been almost the only friend of the sisters. Harry had been always in and out of the house as if he belonged to it, and had seen Laura, the heiress, grow up beside him. Just when he was called to the bar, when he was twenty-four and she nineteen, he announced that he had fallen in love with her. There was no trouble about the match. Harry was clever, pushing, gentlemanly, and rich. He was no spendthrift, he was hard at work as a barrister, and with his introductions to the profession certain to succeed, — certain to get to the top of the tree. They were married.

Even then I remember that there was a cloud upon his face, which has since deepened into the

continual scowl we see now. She was handsome, gentle, and good, — just the sort of person you expect, from the quiet, gentle bringing up of aunts. They lived to see her married, and dropped off very quietly one after the other, leaving her alone in the world with Harry Silcote.

They were very happy together until he had a little boy, and his sister came to live with him. She is now the Princess Castelnovo. One day, help thinking that her folly had something to do with it. She is so very indiscreet. What the meaning of the final catastrophe, no one can know. It came in this manner. He was on the Western Circuit at Exeter, defending a sailor who was charged with stabbing a Jew. Harry Silcote had been as brilliant and as gay as a comet to the time of the opening of his case, which was the last time any of his friends had seen him. The case was interesting, and Silcote more so than he had ever been before.

He won his case, to every one's surprise. A terrified deer-eyed sailor lad, who had kept his eyes fixed on Silcote all the morning, gave him a look of relief, at the astonishing effect of his counsel and eloquence. The judge, who had very much summed up dead against the prisoner, looked at him with a look of admiration for that bulwark of our liberties which was not, at that moment, the prevailing sentiment in his mind. Silcote's friends crowded round him, congratulating; but he scarcely spoke a word to any of them. He left Exeter that day, and was unheard of in the world for four years.

At the end of that time his father died, and he re-emerged from somewhere and took possession of the property. His first wife had died above ten years before in Italy, and he was married again. By his first wife he had a son, the Rev. Algernon Silcote of Lancaster Square; by his second, who was also dead, Thomas, Arthur, and Evelyn.

CHAPTER VI.

ALGERNON.

SILCOTE had a child by his first wife, the first daughter, and sole object in life of the two little brown Miss Denbys, and their married son. That child was represented first of all by a baby, whose specialties were that he was rather prettier than babies in general, and had large eager soulful eyes; that he took notice sooner than most babies, but kept such deductions as he had made from certain facts entirely to himself, refusing to raise them to practice until he had verified them further; and so, consequently, at three years of age, was the most left-handed, unlucky child to be found, as you would guess, for miles round. Not at all a healthy child; a child who did really require a sensible doctor to see after him; who came, by the mother's side, from a family who believed in doctors, and got physicked and drugged accordingly: and the best child for taking medicine ever seen. Indeed, medicine in some form soon became a necessity to him, and later in life, the principal part of his pecuniary embarrassments had their origin in this necessity.

When he was three years old his mother died, and he never saw his father after this. Gradually he developed into a pale, good child, easily kept quiet, easily made to cry; very thoughtful apparently, but keeping his thoughts strictly to himself. Then he became a pale, leggy boy, a great favorite

hool, working very hard, but getting no prizes pt those for good conduct, which were always n to him without question or hesitation. Then e was a lanky youth who stayed at school late, l he became grandfather of the sixth, in a tail and stand-up collars.

hen he grew into the gentlest and best of fresh- to a somewhat fast college, who although slow, gious, and of poor health and peaceful habits, ed a sort of half-respectful, half-pitying affection a the strongest and the wildest: more particu- y after he had, mildly but quite firmly, before a le common room refused to give any informa- i whatever concerning the ringleaders at a bon- , which had been made under his window, and ch he confessed to have witnessed.

The men waited outside hall and cheered him t evening. Those wild young spirits, who had y a week before prized open his oak with a coal- miner at midnight, nailed him into his bedroom, ken his tea-things, and generally conducted mselves as our English youth do when anything normal, and consequently objectional, comes in ir way, now made full amends by coming to him a body, and telling him that it was they who had ne it, but that they didn't know he was a brick, yond which what could any gentleman desire in e way of satisfaction? He got on with them, any will remember the way in which he, too gen- : to denounce, would quietly and silently leave e company when the brilliancy of the conversa- on got a little too vivid for him, and men got fast id noisy. He was in the confidence of all in his cond year. When the elder Bob got his year's stication, it was up and down Algy Silcote's room at he walked, with scared pale face, consulting im as to how the terrible news was to be broken to re governor. When Bob's little brother, the idle, entle little favorite of the college, got plucked for is little-go, he bore up nobly before the other fel- ows, who wisely handed him over to Old Algy; and n Algy's sofa the poor boy lay down the moment hey were alone together, and wept without reserve r hesitation. So he took his modest past degree, and leaving, to the sorrow of every one, from the naster to the messenger, was ordained one Trinity Sunday, having a small London curacy for title.

During the three happy years he had spent in oncluding his education, he had had but few visitors. He was the only quiet man in St. Paul's, and quiet and mild men of other colleges were nervous about coming to tea with him in that den of howling and dangerous lunatics. The lodge alone, with its crowd of extravagantly-dressed men in battered caps and tattered gowns, who stared, and talked loudly and openly of illegal escapades, who rowed in the university eight, — ay, and got first classes in the schools, too, some of them, the terrible fellows, — was too much for these heroes.

They used to pass, quickly and shuddering, that beautiful old gateway, until the shouting of the en- gaged spirits became mellowed by distance; won- dering what could possibly have induced Silcote's "friends" to send him to such a college. But they always greedily listened to Algy's account of the terrible affairs which were carried on in that dread- ful place. And indeed Algy was not sorry to re- count them; for the conversation of the set to which his religious principles had driven him was often wearisomely dull, and sometimes very priggish and ill-conditioned. There were but four or five of them as earnest and good as himself, and the others palled

on him so in time, with their prate of books they bought and never read, and of degrees they never took, that sometimes, in coming back late to that abode of mad fantastic vitality and good-humor called St. Paul's College, he seemed to feel that he was going where he had never been, — home; and was about to get a welcome, — mad enough, but sincere.

So Algy had no more than two out-college visit- ors all the time he was there, and they were won- derful favorites in the place. Algy's brothers were such great successes that the brightness which over- spread his face on their arrival communicated itself to many others.

They were so utterly unlike him. The first, a splendid young cornet of dragoons, up to anything, bound to uphold the honor of the army by being so much faster than anybody else that it became neces- sary for the Vice-Chancellor to communicate with the colonel of his regiment, to the intense delight and admiration of the Paul's men, and the deep horror of poor Algy. But, in spite of Tom's naughti- ness, Tom was dearer to his half-brother Algy than anything else in this world, and the boy dragoon, though he was fond of teasing and shocking Algy, was as fond of him as he could be of anything.

The other brother and visitor was a very different person. A handsome, bright-eyed, eager youth from Eton, with an intense vivid curiosity and de- light in everything, as if the world, which was just opening before him, was a great and beautiful intel- lectual problem, which unfolded and got more beau- tiful as each fresh piece of knowledge and each fresh piece of experience was gained; at one time in a state of breathless delight and admiration at hearing some man pass a splendid examination; then rapt in almost tearful awe at the anthem at Magdalen; then madly whooping on the tow-path. Such were some of the moods which expressed themselves in the noble open face of Arthur, during these precious visits to his brother. In its quieter moments, in the time of its most extreme repose, this face had the look of one thinking earnestly. If people began to talk, the lad sat perfectly still, but turned his keen brown eyes on each speaker in turn as he spoke, without any change of feature; but, if anything touched or interested him in the conversation or argu- ment, his eyebrows would go up, and his mouth lengthen into a smile. A boy too proud to applaud where he did not feel, but applauding eagerly enough where he did.

The good and gentle Algernon had never, to his recollection, seen his father, or been home. The little brown bird-like Miss Denbys, his grandaunt, had died very soon after he was born, or, no doubt, he would have been placed in their guardianship; as it was he was consigned to his paternal aunt's care, the lady who was then plain Miss Silcote, with her forty thousand pounds or so, but whom we have already seen as the Princess Castelnovo. This was the lady who had brought him up; for his father, — although providing well, almost handsomely, for him until he got other provision, — steadily refused to set eyes on him, although he allowed his half-broth- ers by his second marriage to be friends with him.

Algy never really had a home, until he got the one in which we shall see him directly. The place in which he spent his holidays and vacations was, up to a certain time, his aunt Mary's house in Bry- anstone Square. She was most devoted and most kind to him, as she was to every one; though he, even, before she went to Italy for two years and

came back a princess, had time, with his very simple brains, to find out that she was very silly and frivolous at times, very fond of admiration, and sometimes, in her cowardice, as false as false could be, and sometimes, though very seldom, as vindictive as only a real coward can be.

He could remember his mother, — just remember a gentle, kind face, not in the least like (his honesty compelled him to say) the ivory miniature in his possession. He could remember his aunt Mary, as she was at that time. He could remember very well a splendid officer of Horse Guards, red Sir Godfrey Mallory, who used to be much with his mother and his aunt; but he could not quite decide if he had ever seen the father who had so steadily and so strangely refused to see him, — the father whom he heard mentioned once or twice by young fellows at St. Paul's, who came from Berkshire, as the "Dark Squire." He could not remember whether he had ever seen him; but he could call up a certain scene at any time by night or day. His aunt Mary, his mother, and Sir Godfrey Mallory were together in the drawing-room, and he was playing on the carpet, when there came in a scowling, wild-looking man, who said something which passed over the ears of childhood unheeded, but which made terrible havoc among the others. All he could remember was that his aunt Mary scolded all parties till she fell into hysterics, that Sir Godfrey drew himself up, and scornfully exasperated the dark-looking intruder by withering words, until the latter struck the former, and, in an undignified and disgraceful struggle, threw him violently to the ground, but the servants and grooms came in and separated them; and that all this time his mother, having caught him up, held him close to her on the sofa, and when it was all over, and they were gone, continued to tremble so, that he, poor little fool, thought she must be cold, and tried to cover her with some bauble of a rug which lay on the couch. He could remember all this; it was all that his childish recollection could retain; and he used to ask himself, "Was the dark-looking man who came in and beat Sir Godfrey my father?" It was his father. Though Algy remembered his actually striking Sir Godfrey, he happily neither understood, nor could remember, the false coarse words with which the blow was accompanied.

There came a time very soon after, he tells us in his simple way, when they told him he could not go to his mother, for that she was too ill to see him; and very soon after a time when his aunt Mary (a true woman, with all her great faults) came to him, and gently told him that he would not see his mother any more. "I took it from her lips like gospel," Algy says in his simple way. "I did n't know she was dead. I did n't know what death was at that time. She said I was never to see my mother any more, and it was the same as a bit of catechism or creed to me; I always believe what is told me. I should believe anything you told me. And I believed her. I did not cry to go to my mother, for I believed my aunt's statement implicitly. The reason I cried myself into a fever is, that I felt that dreadful sense of utter loneliness and desertion, which a child can feel and live, but which drives a full-grown man to the lunatic asylum or to suicide. They took me to kiss her in her coffin, sir, and I complained to them about her dress. Allow me to call your attention to the fact that the most perfect ballad in the English language is built on the neglect and desolation of two children. As a sentiment-

alist yourself, sir, you are scarcely prepared to do that a neglected and deserted child is a more pathetic object than an unlucky lover."

His curacy was in a rapidly-increasing neighborhood of the north of London. When he was ordained, the place was a wilderness of scaffolds and gravel-pits, with here and there a fragment of a field-hedge, or some country cottage, looking small and very old among the new houses round in all directions; not, however, that the houses were of any vast size, for the neighborhood was decidedly a middle-class one, composed of two to forty pound houses. Before he had been years in the curacy, Lancaster Square, composed of just such houses, was finished, and the church at the end had been built also in all the native hideousness of the period. What with pew-rents, Easter dues, and what not, the stipend of the church was not reach at least, one way with another, £300 a year, income for those parts, giving the incumbent the prestige which it is so necessary for a clergyman to have the Establishment to have. There was no doubt as to have it. The bishop inducted the Rev. Gernon Silcote, to the satisfaction of every one who knew him, from Monseigneur Grey to Mr. B. B. worth, the Baptist minister.

Very few clergymen at all events then began to marry upon £300 a year, and to Algy's crotchete, with his modest habits, it seemed to be a very fine income. Mr. Betts, one of the wealthiest men in those parts, a stock-broker, had been the principal subscriber to the testimonial which he had received when he had quitted the curacy: Miss Betts (his only daughter) and he had a mutual admiration for one another, and so they married, and he bid farewell to all hopes of comfort for the future.

She was a foolish woman, an only daughter, pretty, gentle, and utterly spoiled and ignorant. Whether it was his voice, his position, or his preaching which made her fall in love with this great young curate, it is impossible to say, but she admired him, and gave him every opportunity of doing so in love with her. He did so, and to his astonishment and delight, for the first time in his life found that one woman honored him by a preference above all other men. Some of the young fellows of those parts, who were just getting on so far in life as to think of settling, expressed their discontent with a parson, with half their income, carrying of the best match thereabouts, not reflecting that Algy had discounted his position as a gentleman, and education, for a large sum. In a year's time, however, they congratulated one another on their escape.

She had certainly brought with her an allowance of £150 a year, but she was so extravagant, so restless, and so silly, that it was worse than nothing. She was confined just as the sudden shock of her father's bankruptcy came on them. From this time to the day of her death the poor woman was only a fearfully expensive encumbrance.

The bankrupt father was instantly and promptly received into Algy's house, by Algy himself, with a most affectionate welcome. If there was one more man more than another to whom Algy was polite and deeply respectful, it was to this suddenly broken man, whom he had made, by his own act, an ever-present burden to himself. Mr. Betts, vulgar, low, ostentatious, selfish, and not too honest, but he was in distress, and Algy, simple fellow, knew only of the Gospel.

Algy's health had never been good, and now his wife worried him into a state of permanent dyspepsia.

: whatever they call that utter lowering of the n which arises from worry and anxiety, as as from laziness and over-feeding. She wor- herself to death after her fourth confinement, left him slightly in debt, with a household in a anything like comfort and management had banished five years before.

it was home to them. They contrived to their muddle and untidiness to themselves. was always well dressed on Sunday, and, his misfortunes had begun, his sermons had ired a plaintive and earnest beauty which they at have lacked before. The more weary life r to him, the more earnest — sometimes the a fiercely eager — he got, on one point, — the adless goodness and mercy of God. He gained er with his people. The very extreme party, in and beyond the Established Church, allowed great unction. His church was full, but there e but a limited number of sittings, and his four dren were growing, and must be educated. So ame about that home became home to him no ger, — that it became necessary for him to give his last and only luxury, privacy. It became cessary for him to take pupils.

t was his father-in-law Betts who pointed out to a this method of increasing his income. Betts s a bad specimen of the inferior kind of the Lon- a City speculator. He had all his ostentation, his ogance, his coarseness, his refusal to recognize h motives (in which latter characteristic your asant and your town mechanic are so often far perior to the man who leads him), while he was thout his *bonhomie*, and his ready-handed care- s generosity. Neither ostentation nor real care- s good-will could ever make him subscribe liber- y; the only large subscription he ever gave was at to Algy's, to his prospective son-in-law's testi- onial; not a very nice man, by any means, — a an who seemed to Algy with his Oxfordism en- rely made up of faults with no virtues, a man who ated on his dearest prejudices a hundred times a ay, a man sent him for his sins. The horror of his ing a bankrupt, the horror of anything connected ith dear noisy old St. Paul's having gone into the ankruptcy Court, was bad enough to make him nounce all communion with his old friends, and eep himself with lofty humility from the world; ut after this the man, himself, remained on his ands, a deadly thorn in his side, annoying him all ay long by his manners, his way of eating even, his verlasting allusion to his losses, and, more than all, y his clumsy expressions of gratitude, "the more offensive," said Arthur, who had not then been quite ured of priggishness, "because they are sincere."

For Betts's very numerous faults were more those of education and training than of nature; for if one could not believe that some natures are more difficult to spoil than others, and that the whole business is a mere result of the circumstance of a man's bringing up, one would be getting near to believe nothing at all. The man's nature was not a bit changed, be- cause Algy in his treatment of him scrupulously fol- lowed the directions given in the Sermon on the Mount. His nature remained the same, but all his old landmarks of riches and respectability had been swept away by his bankruptcy, and immediately after he saw, with his eyes cleared from all cobwebs, while in a state of humiliation, a man who acted on a law he had never recognized, hardly ever heard of, the pure law of Christianity. Not that he ever ful- ly recognized it: perhaps he was too old. To the

very last, while alluding to Algy, he would say, "Sir, my son-in-law is the most perfect gentleman I ever saw, and a sincere Christian, sir. Yes, sir, a most sincere Christian, I give you my honor."

When Algy, for the first time in his life, found that he was actually pushed for money; when he found that the weekly bills were increasing, without the means of paying them; that although Reginald might be kept from school a little longer, yet that his darling eldest born, Dora, was growing vulgar, and imitating in her talk the maids, with whom she spent four fifths of the day, instead of him, with whom she spent about one fifth; then he thought it time to consult his father-in-law, whose knowledge of the world, he put it to him, might be most valu- able.

"You see," said Algy, "that I am a mere child; I really am. Such small intellectual vigor as I pos- sess" (he used this style of talk to Betts; he would have spoken very differently to a university man) "is used up by my sermons. I ask you, — you will smile at my simplicity, — what does a man in my position do to increase his income?"

"Are you quite sure," said Mr. Betts, somewhat huskily, "that you would do better by increasing your income?"

"It is absolutely necessary, I fear, my dear sir," said Algy. "I must have a good governess for Dora. Our confidence is mutual, I believe, and I cannot conceal from you the fact, that unless Dora has some lady to superintend her education, — well, I will cut it short, — that in fact she will not grow up a lady herself."

"Who the deuce wants her to be a lady? She won't have any money."

"My dear sir —"

"I brought up my girl for a lady, and she was no good, at least to you. I don't believe in girls, with- out one tithe of the prospects she had when you married her, being brought up as ladies. Govern- essing ain't any good, I tell you; they never make one and a half per cent on the money spent on their education, and the flower-making ain't much good now. They say the women are going to take to the law writing, but a friend of mine in the busi- ness says they'll never come it. Try that. But, Lord, see the various games I have tried to make a little money, and ease you. And see my success. I am a burden on you still."

"You are no burden, my dear friend. At least, if you ever had been, you could repay the whole of your obligation by pointing out to me the way to increase my income. I must have my children edu- cated as gentlemen and ladies, and Reggy must go to school."

"Must he? I never went to school, but here I am, says you. Well, I won't dispute; but knowing what I do know, I'd apprentice him to a smith. Look here; your education cost two thousand pounds, first and last, and I don't deny that the in- vestment was a good one. Three hundred a year for two thousand is a good investment. But then your friends had the money, and you turned out well, and you had luck in getting this church; whereas, in the case of Reggy, you ain't got the money, and he may turn out bad (which is deuced likely), and you nor no other man can be answer- able for his luck. Therefore, I say, apprentice him to the smith's trade."

"I could not dream of such a thing."

"Of course you could n't. You're a gentleman, and I'll speak up for gentlemen as long as I live."

But gentlemen — I mean such as you — never do any good for themselves; you know swells, don't you?"

"Do you mean noblemen?"

"Of course I do."

"Yes, I know a few noblemen; I think I know a good many noblemen. At Paul's we were very intimate with Christchurch, and I was popular in both places; but what then?"

"Why, this: why do you send these swells away when they seek you? Why, the day before yesterday, while I was at the parlor window, and you in your study, up comes the Marquis of Bangor, hunting you out as if you were a fox. And you gave him 'Not at home'; and I heard him say, 'Dash it all, I should like to find him again,' or something of that sort. And I went to the stationer's and hunted him up in the Peerage. Patron of nine livings. And I got the Clergy List, and I found two of the incumbents instituted before Waterloo; and then you come to ask me how to increase your income. Three words of common civility to Lord Bangor would make you a rich man."

"Yes, but," said Algy, "you see I could n't say them, — more particularly now you have told me that two of his livings are likely to drop in. Don't you see?"

Betts could n't see that at all.

"I'll try to explain. I used to know Lord Bangor as an equal. It became my painful duty on one occasion to rebuke Lord Bangor, openly and publicly, for speaking in a way which — which I did not approve of. I never did so to any other man, for my custom was to leave the room when talk began to get fast and wild. That he has respected me ever since is nothing. Is this the man to whom you would have me go and truckle for a living?"

"I can't understand this sort of thing," said Betts.

"But you are familiar with other noblemen."

"I am not familiar with any. I cannot bring them here; I cannot."

"Well, you know best," said Betts, "I thought swells were swells, and were to be used accordingly. Otherwise, what is the good of them? If you are going in this line, you must take pupils. There is the Rev. George Thirlwall takes three, at two hundred a year apiece. There's six hundred for you, barring their keep."

"Yes; but then Thirlwall was a Balliol scholar, and got a double first. He can command such a price. I doubt, as a mere pass man, whether I should get any pupils at all."

"But his education did not cost any more than yours."

"Rather less, I should think. He got his scholarship and his fellowship. I never got anything better than a good conduct prize. I have not the brains."

"That's a rum thing," pondered Betts aloud. "He ain't half such a good fellow as you, and a stick in the pulpit. Hang education, I say. I don't see my way to the interest on my money. And I've been a bold man, too, too bold, as your pocket can tell, for this many a year, sir. It was the Illinois Central finished me at last, but the Illinois Central seems to me safe alongside of a university education. However, if you are bent against the law writing and blacksmithing, and against the using of swell friends, so strong, you must try for pupils. Unless —"

"Unless; what?"

"Unless you would try your father, sir."

"I tried him long ago," said Algy.

"And it did n't do?"

"O dear, no; not in the least. Far from it."

CHAPTER VII.

PAR NOBILE FRATRUM.

ALGERNON'S modest allowance of £250 had been continued through the usual channel all through the time of his curacy, but when he entered on the duties of his incumbency he was formed by his father's lawyer that it would be continued; he submitted, with a sigh, without monstrosity or remark, and gave up all his assistance from that quarter. It was not so proudly made any resolution against accepting it merely seemed to him utterly improbable; such help would ever be offered, and utterly probable that he should ever ask for it.

But many apparent impossibilities have been for the sake of children. When he began to see that he was poor, and was getting poorer, thought of their future was quite enough to set aside any lingering feelings of pride or fear, but such been there. He put his case through his lawyer, and was refused. Old Silcote wished it understood that he could hold no further communication with Mr. Algernon Silcote.

Once, not long after this, the children fell ill with measles, or some childish disorder, and a sad the poor widower had with them, and was thanking God that they were on the mend, that he had lost none of his precious little branches, when a message came from Silcote, ordering the children to be sent there for change of air until they recovered their health. The message came through Silcote's lawyer, and was done in ill-conditioned a manner as need be, but Algy had no "proper spirit" whatever. He thanked the children off, and they were kept there for two months. He was very thankful. "The Lord then is not to descend to the next generation," said. He thanked God for it.

The younger of his two visitors at Oxford: bright-eyed young Arthur, now grown to be a man we saw him at Silcotes the night of the pasting affray, paid him frequent visits as of yore, was he who brought the children back from Silcotes, with new clothes, new toys, new roses in his cheeks, and, alas! new wants and a new discontent at the squalid and untidy home to which they returned. Arthur, who noticed everything, saw Miss Dora turning up her nose at several times and heard one or two petulant remarks from her strong disparagement of the *ménage* at No. 20 Lancaster Square, and he said, with his usual decision, "I shall stay a few days with you, Algy. Dora is tired with your journey, and consequently is disagreeable. Go to bed. No, leave your bed here. I want it."

Dora obeyed, reddening. "I'll stay a day with my Algy, and whip these children in. They have been most awfully spoiled by that very foolish set of ours. You will require the aid of my influence for a short time, until hers has become a thing of the past. What a noble child that Dora is! An element of good about her. She has a will, and requires to have it controlled by a stronger one. But she is a sweet child."

"My Dora," said Algy, with perfect good faith, "reminds me, in all her ways, of her dear mother."

er was just going to rap out in his short way, forbidding. But he neither did that, nor do felt inclined to do a moment afterwards, — it laughing: he had got that tongue of his command by now.

ll, she is a very sweet child, and Reggy is an artist. Reggy will do great art. Reggy will be a Royal Academician, old dunderheads can ever be got to overcome inveterate jealousy against anything appearing to talent and originality."

answered in commonplaces, not quite knowing words he was uttering, for he was confounding how an undergraduate could have wonderful intuition about an art of which he is so tirefully ignorant, as to see a future Royal Academician in a child of nine, whose efforts hitherto are certainly below the average. But it was Arthur, he thought again with a smile, — Arise omniscient.

our went on. "I love and admire everything, but I never admired you more than when I gave up your pride and allowed these children this visit."

have no pride, Archy," said Algernon. "And indeed, I could not display it in that quarter." Arthur turned his frank and noble face upon him and looked at him keenly, and, as curtly as a lais's monk, asked, — "Why?"

"cannot tell you."

do you mean on general grounds, on the grounds you have no right to be proud to your own father or that you have no right to stand in your father's right? Or are there other grounds for not being proud?"

"Ain't you getting — getting — come, a little too close, I won't say coarse, in your questions, my dear," said Algy, with the most perfect sweet temper. "I beg a thousand pardons, old boy. You are right. Do forgive me, and don't answer me. I ought I had cured myself of that miserable trick of cross-examining witnesses, and putting everybody in a logical hole. Let us change the subject."

Not at all," said Algy. "I am going to answer. The reasons on which I acted in sending my children to their grandfather at Silcotes were just as you have suggested: that I had no right to be proud to my own father, and that I should be liked to stand in my children's light. You asked then if there were other reasons why I should have no pride in that quarter. I answer that there are. We must understand one another, at least partially, my dearest Arthur, even if that partial understanding aids in our separation. I know that as to your good offices that I owe this recognition my children. Utter the question which I see hanging on your lips."

"I'll utter it, Algy, though all the powers of the inferno shall never make me believe in you as anything but the best man who ever walked. Here it is. Did you, before Tom or I remember, ever — all — make a fiasco?"

"Never! To you I will say the simple truth. Though I'm not strong in brain, and have that want of energy which comes from habitual ill-health, yet I have lived as blameless a life as any of us poor sinners can hope to lead."

"Then what has caused this terrible injustice of my father towards you?"

"He has not been unjust. He has been most generous. Question on, and let us have it out."

"Has his extraordinary treatment of you arisen from any facts in connection with your mother?"

"Yes. I will now finish this conversation, and we will never resume it. I was put in possession of these facts when I was seventeen. Now ask yourself, but never ask me, what has made me gray at six-and-thirty, and has produced that never-ending thought about self, and distrust of others, which has made him very little better than a lunatic."

"There is more than that in the governor's malady, you know," said young Oxford, then omniscient with good-humored flippancy. "You have not got to the bottom of that. That was all very well, what you said just now about the 'never-ending self-contemplation' of the governor; but, unfortunately it doesn't exist. I don't rank the intellectual capacity of either you or the governor very high, and there have evidently been lies told by some one, probably by Aunt Mary. I'll put it all right. I'll go bail your mother was a good woman. The governor has got that curious eccentricity of brain which is generally acquired by a connection with the aristocracy, and they develop it by marrying their relations, and in some cases doing absolutely nothing for nearly ninety years. It must be evident, even to a third-class intellect, that the pair of you are slightly cracked. Come, *solvuntur risu*. Eh?"

"Not yet," said Algy. "If you knew everything, you would wonder why I ever accepted anything at all from him. I should reply to this, that I am not a hero, and that I have only had enough to prevent my being a disgrace to him."

CHAPTER VIII.

On this occasion Arthur pointed out to Dora what he was pleased to call the extreme meanness of her conduct towards her father, in making disparaging comparisons between his house and her grandfather's. Dora received her scolding with perfect composure and silence, replying not one word, but looking steadily at him with her hands behind her back. Though she did not confess her fault, yet she never repeated it. Their visits to Silcotes took place every year after this. The old man ordered it, and every one obeyed it; but Dora, honest little story-teller as she was, always, on her return home, used audibly to thank Heaven that she was back in her own place once more, and to vilify and ridicule the whole *ménage* of Silcotes most entirely. The other children used generally to roar all through the night after their return, and to be unmanageable for the next week.

Two pupils were got, doughfaced foolish youths, who had made so little use of their schooling that their matriculation examination was considered more than doubtful, and so were, with the wisdom of some parents, taken from experienced hands at school, and sent into the inexperienced hands of Algy. That he did his duty by them, and got them through, I need not say; but it was on the strength of these pupils that he engaged a governess.

Miss Lee was a foolish Devonshire young person, whose father had been a clergyman, and, as she always averred, kept hounds. It was quite possible, for he left her entirely destitute, and with no education, and so it became necessary for her to go out as a governess. She was not in the least fit for it, and Algy, of course, could only offer the most modest stipend. So they naturally came together from the extreme ends of England. Miss Lee, in addition to

the disqualifications of ignorance and not very refined manners, had another disqualification, considered in some families, and for good reason, to be greater than either of the others. She, like the majority of Devonshire girls, was amazingly beautiful.

Such, in the main, and given as shortly as possible, so as to avoid being duller than was necessary, is the information I had gained from Miss Raylock, Arthur, Algy, and others, about the Silcote family, as they were at the time of the children's third visit,—the time of the poaching raid described in the first chapter. This coincided with the fourth time that Captain Tom Silcote had got leave of absence from duty, for the purpose of coming home, and representing one half of his debts as the whole, and, with a sort of recollection of his Catechism, promising to lead a new life, and be in charity with all men. The debts which he confessed to his father were always paid, for was not he the heir? and he always went back to lead the old life over again, and to hate his unsatisfied creditors with all the hatred of a gentleman living habitually beyond his means.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SQUIRE INVADERS MRS. SUGDEN'S TERRITORY AND GETS BEATEN.

BORSEY is a great sheet of rolling woodland four or five miles square, which in two points, close together, heaves itself up so high as to be a landmark for several counties. The greater, and all the highest part of it, is unbroken beech forest; but, as you come lower, it begins to get broken open by wild green lanes, tangled fantastically at their sides by bramble, sweet-brier, wild rose, and honeysuckles, by which a few solitary cottages stand here and there; picturesque cottages, generally standing alone, and not stinted for garden ground. As you get lower the fields become more frequent and larger, and you are among farms, generally embosomed in dense clusters of dark and noble elms; below this steep fields stoop suddenly down to the level of the broad river meadows, and around three fifths of the circle winds the Thames; by day a broad river of silver; in some evenings, when the sun has just sunk behind the dark dim wolds of Oxfordshire, a chain of crimson pools.

Dim, mysterious wolds are those of Oxfordshire across the river; rolling, hedgeless, cultivated chalk down, capped always by the dark short bars of woodland,—a land of level though somewhat lofty lines, with no artistic incident for miles, in strong contrast to the fantastic freshness of the elm hedge-rows of the neighboring Berkshire. A very melancholy piece of country, almost as melancholy as some of the warren lands in Norfolk, or one suspects of Lincolnshire, else why did a Lincolnshire man write,—

"Where from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool

On the oat grass and the sword grass, and the bulrush in the pool?"

—two of the most beautiful and melancholy lines in our language, more than worthy of Wordsworth. A lonely, dim-looking county that Oxfordshire, as that dreaming little shepherd lad, James Sugden, saw it month after month, year after year, in his solitary watch over the sheep among the highest fields of the beautiful Borsey, or from the door of his father's cottage, highest up among the towering beech wood, when merry haymaking and merrier

harvest was over, and the September mowing down due west.

The boy had got rather a fine education. I tell you how presently, though if you are a kind reader, a reader for whom one loves to tell you will have guessed the mere fact before. I cate a boy loosely, and set him to tend sheep, if he don't develop his imaginative powers, he be pretty sure he has not got any, and had a last chance, be sent to Cambridge, or else to see what he can make of the mathematics. The boy was imaginative enough for a poet, wanted wits and application, without which nor any one else can possibly do anything, and used to dream about these Oxfordshire wolds.

To his left, as he sat at his father's door, he saw a view much more interesting than the one over Oxfordshire. Reading, six miles off, almost at foot, and above the towers and the smoke, on a day, a dim blue mountain, crowned with dark Siddon, his mother told him, at whose base Lord Portsmouth and Lord Carnarvon, more lords than Lord Abingdon, almost as great an ultimate lord of the great hanging wolds of Oxford. All this was very fine, but he always preferred the desolate wolds to the west, more particularly after his father had told him one evening, in defence, when they were eating their porridge together in the garden, under the falling dew, the gathering night, that just beyond those dim hanging wolds lay the most beautiful city in the world.

"How far off?" asked the boy.

"Fifteen mile, across through Ipsden. A matter of eight-and-twenty by Benson and Dorchester."

"It is n't Seville is it? Of course it is not. Seville is the finest town in the world."

"Oxford beats it hollow, I tell you."

"Have you seen them both?"

"Yes. Leastways, I know one on 'em well, that's a quite enough to give me a right to say. If you want to know both sides of a question, let you speaks about it, everlasting dumbness will be your portion. Whatever you've got to say, say it low, rap it out, hard and heavy, and see what the other fellow has got to say. If he has the best, give in; if he has n't, shut him up. But don't believe that you are in the right, for all that. I believe that he is a greater fool than you. So you see, old fellow, I say again that Oxford is a finer town than the one you named. We'd best get to bed, old chap, had n't we?"

Looking from the door of his father's cottage, he could see the top of the chimneys of Silcotes behind him among the trees. A fine old place Silcotes, built in 1650, a foursquare place of endless gables of brick—the great addition made by the present squire's father, who may almost be said to have built it all again, being made in perfect harmony with the seventeenth century nucleus which he found. The additions had been made so long, that the new bricks, with the assistance of cunning washes, had been toned down to the color of the older building, that it required an architect's eye to tell new from old.

A most harmonious house, for, in fact, the old Silcote's architect, with a taste rare in those days of "the worthless and bankrupt century," which ended by committing suicide, had carefully and painfully fulfilled the original design of the seventeenth century architect, whose work had probably been stopped by the Revolution, and was may, before he patched up and finished, have been

monading from old Basing House, booming as the S. W. from behind Bearwood.

as a very beautiful place, and very beautiful-up. If you went into the stables you would master's eye, or his stud-groom's eye, in the raw plait which edged the litter; a Dunstanet was only a slight improvement on it. If you went to the other end of the *ménage*, if you went to look round the flower-garden, you would see a managing eye there also; terrace after terrace of the newest and finest flowers, — lobelias, calceolarias, geraniums, and what not, — piling them up in hideous incongruous patterns, until, in sheer confusion, they became almost artistic; then, above all, the great terrace of roses, which came down with nearly a park-like beauty, and then on to the house itself, and hung the deep, dark, — the only solecism in the house, with festoons of one D'Espray, and Dundee Rambler, and then, climbing, hung magnificent trophies of Blarney, and Gloire de Dijon, at every coign of vane in the long façade.

Eight thousand a year in housekeeping, and company worthy of being so called ever seen." — was what the Princess of Castelnuovo used to tell Miss Raylock, and the Princess should have known, for she was housekeeper.

About the "company" she was undoubtedly right. As regards the eight thousand a year, why, must generally divide that lady's statements by five, and then be very careful to examine closely the grounds on which she based the remaining half of her valuation. There is, however, no doubt that this house of Silcote's, even in these dark times, was kept up with amazing liberality; and the very servants who left him of their own accord would tell you, almost pathetically, that they had never had anything to complain of, and that there was not a servant's hall as Silcotes for miles round.

For, in spite of the liberality of Silcote's housekeeping, servants would not stay with him. There was no society and no change, — things which servants desire more even than good living. If you ask that the footman in plush breeches, or the groom in white, is a mere machine, you are mistaken. You think that the mere paying of these men's wages, and feeding them well, will secure these men, but you are again mistaken. My lord or the squire cannot destroy these men's individuality, when they are dressed in the clothes of the eighteenth century. Necessity may keep them quiet; good living and yety may keep them contented; but if they get paid they will "better" themselves as sure as possible, even at lower wages, and worse beer.

There is a way of keeping the best of these people about you: by perfect justice and temper, and by real sympathizing kindness. I know of servants who, twelve shillings a week who won't better themselves at sixteen. These people will stay with you, if you care for them, and make them sympathize with the fortunes of your house. If treated as machines they will better themselves. The advanced radicals say that you have no business to have such people about you at all, and, being innocent in this matter ourselves, we may theoretically think that the advanced radicals are right.

However, Silcote's servants never stayed; their formula was, "that a man was not sent into the world to die of the blues," and I am sorry to say that in self-justification they set abroad, through the county, an account of the Dark Squire's eccentricities, a great deal darker than the mere truth.

The ultimate fate of little James Sugden, on the night of the poaching affray, was this. His preserver had him plastered and mended as far as was possible, and then, having done his "possible," handed him over to the butler, who proceeded towards the men's quarters to see if he could get him a bed.

Those who were asleep were immovable, and those who were awake objected so very strongly, and in such extremely pointed language, that he did not dare to push his point; at last, getting tired of argument, he used his authority where he dared, and quartered him on the youngest stable-boy. At sunrise James was on the alert, dressed, and ready to make his escape home.

Which was the way, and where were the dogs? His companion told him the way, but could give no information about the dogs. They might be still loose: he would not venture beyond the stable yard for ten pounds till he knew they were kennelled. But the intense wish the boy had to be at home again overcame his fears, and he resolved to go. He had all the dislike which a dog or a child has, at first, to these strange faces and places, and he dreaded seeing any one in authority for fear they should bid him stay, in which case he knew he must obey. He fled. One terrible fright he had; he opened a door in the wall, and when he had shut it behind him, he found himself alone among the bloodhounds. His terror was simply unutterable at this moment; but the dogs knew him and proposed to come with him, and he, afraid to drive them back, was escorted by them as far as a gate, beyond which they would not come. Once out of sight of them he sped away through the forest shard towards his home.

It was late in the day, when he was sitting between his father and mother, looking out over the little garden of potatoes and cabbage, of filbert and apple trees, towards the westerling sun over the Oxfordshire wolds. Their poor flowers were mostly fading by now, and the garden looked dull; for cottagers' flowers are mostly spring flowers. In the lengthening evenings of early spring, the sight of nature renewing herself has its effect on the poorest of the hinds, to a certain extent; and in their dull way they make efforts at ornamentation, perhaps because they have some dim hope that the coming year cannot be quite so hopeless as the one gone past, — will not be merely another milestone towards chronic rheumatism and the workhouse. They must have such hopes, poor folks, or they would madden. These hopes come to them in the spring, with reviving nature, and then they garden. The wearied hind stays late out in the cool brisk April night, and spares a little time after he has done delving in his potatoes to trimming and planting a few poor flowers. But after, when nature gets productive and exacting, she absorbs him, and the flowers are neglected, only a few noble perennials, all honor to their brave hearty roots, — your lilies and your hollyhocks, and latterly I am pleased to see everywhere your *Delphinium formosum*, — standing bravely up amidst the forced neglect. So Sugden's garden, this bright September afternoon, was not sufficiently gaudy to keep James's eye from wandering across the little green orchard beyond the well, on to the distant hills.

Suddenly his father, badly hurt and still in pain, grew animated. "By Job," he said, "there's the deer! There she goes. Hi! look at her! There she goes into the Four Acre, making for Pitcher's Spinney. She'll go to soil at Wargrave for a hun-

drod pounds. They are hunting early this year. Stars and garters! if here she don't come heading back! It's old Alma* as sure as you are born, and she knows the ground."

They were all out in the garden, looking eagerly where Sudgen pointed, expecting every moment to see Mr. Davis, and King, and a noble cavalcade, come streaming out of the forest-ride. They were disappointed; it was not one of Her Majesty's deer which Sudgen had seen, but a great dog, nearly as large and nearly of the same color, which now came cantering towards them. They had stared after him so long, and, after they had found out what he was, had stood looking at him so long, that some one else had time to come behind them, and, while they were slowly realizing that it was only one of the bloodhounds from the hall, a harsh voice from behind them said, —

"He won't eat you. If he did he would not get very fat off you."

They turned, and found themselves face to face with the Dark Squire.

All three were too much surprised to speak, and so they stood a moment or so, and looked at Silcote. A compact, intensely firm-looking and broad-shouldered figure, with a grizzly head, square features, and a continual frown. Dress: gray coat, gray breeches, gray gaiters, square and inextorable boots. The late Mr. Cobbett would have admired the look of him very much until they got to loggerheads, which would not have been long.

He had to begin the conversation again. "You stand frightened at the first sight of me, you sheep. I was saying that if my dogs ate a dozen such as you they would not get fat. You peasantry are getting too lean for mere dog's meat, with your ten shillings a week, and your five shillings off for rent, firing, clothes' club, and the rest of it. You are sheep, mere sheep. Why don't you make a Jacques of it? You hate me, and I hate you. Why don't you cut my throat, burn my house down, — unless you want it for your own purposes, — and subdivide my lands? Bah! you have no courage for Saxon population. Cannot you produce a Murat?"

It was Mrs. Sudgen who answered. "You seem in one of your dark moods, Squire, that is to say, talking more nonsense than usual. You say you hate us, *cela va sans dire*; you say we hate you, that is completely untrue of us as a class, — the more particularly about you, who are, with all your foolishness, the justest landlord about these parts. As I used to say to my darling Duchess of Cheshire, 'Don't patronize those people in the way you do. Love them and trust them, and they will in some sort love and trust you. Don't be always loving them in their own houses, and worrying them to death with impertinent inquiries about their domestic matters. They will only lie to you and hate you. Come to them sometimes as *Deus ex machina*, and relieve them from some temporary difficulty. You can always do that, for they are always in difficulties. You can buy them up at a pound a head like that, whereas, if you hunt and worry them, ten pounds won't make them grateful.' Now, my dear Squire, what is the object of your visit?"

Never, probably, was a man so utterly aghast as Silcote. Here was a common laborer's wife, dressed in the commonest print, a woman he had never seen

or never noticed before, blowing him up in English and Latin, and audaciously picking him out as the most delicate and most cherished part of his life, and saying things to him which he could not petted Arthur dare not say. He looked at her and saw only a common laborer's wife, in a print gown, who laughed at him while he stared.

But she was very beautiful. Silcote had never seen the very light brown hair of the peasant-women as beautiful, on the same head, as the Pay de Ceux, but never in England. He had perfectly sharply cut features of the Neolithic type, indeed, one seldom does, unless there is a touch of which some old postmaster, or old peasant man, will tell you over the pipes and grog, and cricket-club dinner. Silcote stood amazed at his suspicions at once, — the man lived on a farm, but he was a gentleman, in speech at all events.

"I beg your pardon, I was not aware of your lady here. I beg your pardon."

"There is no lady here; no semblance of a lady. I am merely an honest and respectable, perhaps the best and respectable, laborer's wife. You see me working in the fields any day, 'scowling and straddling in the clogging fallows.' Let me tell you that you have shut yourself up from the world much, or you would never have accused me of being a lady. Ladies, as far as I can judge from their limited experience of them, don't speak to gentlemen as I spoke to you just now."

"May I ask you a question, ma'am?" said Silcote, still lost in wonder.

"A dozen, if you choose."

"And get a dozen refusals of answer. Well, good, but will you answer this one out of the dozen? I will only ask you one question of your dozen, and I ask it. Who the deuce are you?"

"Exactly what I have said before. A poor girl, daughter, who worked in the fields, when her father became a cowman, in consequence of her great beauty, I believe, she drew herself up, and proudly, but frankly and honestly looked at Silcote with the great love of her), "became lady's maid to Lady O. Poyntz, now Duchess of Cheshire. Those girls would have everything handsome about them. Then there was a paradise of folly: no, not true love and good intentions are not folly, then I turned peasant again, and then I went to my old work, and you passed me the other way, scowling like your old self, while I was setting up. Now, what did you please to want here, Squire?"

The Squire finding, after a good many questions, some one who was not a bit afraid of him, and who was civilly and to the purpose.

"The fact is, that this boy of yours behaved pluckily last night. I want to better him. I want to take him into the stable as a helper, and to rise. It is a provision for him. These country servants I get from Reading never stay. He will be my heir, has taken a fancy to him; I brought him home last night. He will be a groom, and will be provided for for life. Will he like to come?"

"No. Let him stick to his sheep. I know more about domestic service than you, and my answer is 'No.' Let him freeze on the hillside with his sheep. Let him be late with his team, and then get out of his bed at four in the biting winter weather."

* Mr. Sudgen's chronology is more than queer. He must have projected his soul largely into the future to name one of the finest deer which ever ran some years before that deer was calved.

them again at four. Let him do hedge and ditch work on food which a Carolina negro would refuse; let him plough the heaviest clay until the public-house becomes a haven and a rest to him; let him mow, until the other mowers find him so weak that he must mow with them no longer, lest he ruin the contract; let him reap, until his loud-tongued wife can beat him at that, for he must marry, — O Lord, for he must marry, — and in his own station too. Let him go on at the plough-tail; among the frozen turnips, among the plashy hedgesides, until the inevitable rheumatism catches him in the back, and the parish employs him on the roads to save the rates. And then, when his wife dies, let them send him to the house, and let him rot there and be buried in a box; but he shall not be a domestic servant for all that, Silcote. I know too much about that. We have tried enough of our own, without requiring yours."

Silcote had nothing more to say — to her, at least. What he had to say he said to himself as he went home.

"That is a devil of a woman. She is all wrong, but she puts it so well. She is *en rabie*. I never saw such a deuce of a woman in my life."

So two violent ill-regulated souls struck themselves together in consequence of this poaching raid, to the great benefit of both. The continual opposition of dame Reason to rampant Folly is, I suspect, only suspect, of very little use. One knows so little. Dickens, watching narrowly and keenly, but making no deductions whatever, tells us, in effect, that the American mad doctors allow a patient's folly to develop to such an extent that it becomes folly to themselves. How would it be to allow another patient's folly to become so foolish as to make the saner patient awkward of his crotchets?

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH JAMES BEGINS HIS CAREER.

ALGERNON's children had departed for London. Captain Tom, having had the confessed moiety of his debts paid, was at Dublin with his regiment. Arthur was back at his tutor work; no one was left with the Squire but the golden-haired child Anne.

Once Silcote had a son, some say the best loved of all, who rebelled against him, and his hard-strained authority and coarse words, who left his house in high disdain, casting him off with scorn, and rendering the breach between them utterly irreparable by marrying a small tradesman's daughter. He got some small clerkship in Demerara, where he died in a very few years — as men who suddenly wrench up every tie and association are apt to die — of next to nothing. His pretty and good little wife followed him soon, and Anne was left to the mercies of a kind sea-captain, who had brought them over. The first intimation which Silcote had of his son's death was finding a seafaring-man waiting in his hall one day with a bright little girl of about three years old. Silcote heard the story of his son's death in dead silence, accepted the child, and then coolly began to talk on indifferent nautical matters with the astounded mariner. He kept him to lunch, plied him with rare and choice liquor of every kind, and was so sippant and noisy, that the bemuddled sailor quitted the house under the impression that Silcote was the most unfeeling brute

he had ever met in his life. It was Silcote's humor that he should think so, and he had his wish.

From this time she never was allowed to leave him. He was never ostentatiously affectionate to her before other people, but they must have had a thoroughly good understanding in private, this queer couple, for she was not only not a bit afraid of him, but absolutely devoted to him. She was never thwarted or contradicted in any way, and was being educated by her aunt.

Such treatment and such an education would have spoilt most children. Anne was a good deal spoilt, but not more so than was to have been expected. She used to have bad days, — days in which everything went wrong with her; days which were not many hours old when her maid would make the discovery, and announce it pathetically, that Miss had got out of bed the wrong side. We will resume her acquaintance on one of those days, and see her at her worst.

Silcote hated the servants to speak to him unless he spoke first, and then, like most men who shut themselves from the world, would humiliate himself by allowing them to talk any amount of gossip and scandal with him. Anne's conduct had, however, been so extremely outrageous this morning that, when Silcote had finished his breakfast, had brooded and eaten his own heart long enough, and ordered Anne to be sent to him to go out walking, the butler gratuitously informed him, without waiting for any encouragement to speak, that "Miss was uncommon naughty this morning, and had bit the Princess."

"What has she been worrying the child about? The child don't bite me. Fetch her here."

Anne soon appeared, dressed for walking, in a radiant and saintlike frame of mind. She was so awfully good and agreeable that any one but that mole Silcote would have seen that she was too good by half. One of the ways by which Silcote tried to worry himself into Bedlam (and he would have succeeded but for the perfect healthiness of his constitution) was this, — he would take up an imaginary grievance against some one, and exasperate himself about it until he was half mad. Any one who gives himself to the vice of self-isolation, as Silcote had for so many years, may do the same; may bring more devils swarming about his ears than ever buzzed and flapped round the cell of a hermit. He did so on this occasion. He got up in his own mind a perfectly imaginary case against the poor, long-suffering Princess for ill-using Anne, and went muttering and scowling out for his morning's walk, with Anne, wonderfully agreeable and exquisitely good, beside him.

They went into the flower-garden first, and Anne, with sweet innocence, asked if she might pick some flowers. Of course he said Yes; and after walking up and down a quarter of an hour, the head-gardener came to him, and respectfully gave him warning. When Silcote looked round, he frankly asked the man to withdraw his warning, and told him that he would be answerable it did not occur again. Anne had distinguished herself. In a garden, kept as M'Croskie kept that at Silcote's, you can soon do twenty pounds' worth of damage. Anne had done some thirty. Thunbergias, when clumsily gathered, are apt to come up by the root, and you may pull up a bed before you get a satisfactory bunch. Araucarias, some of them, form very tolerable backs for bouquets, but they were very expensive the Also, if you pull away haphazard at a bed of f

class fuchsias, have a rough-and-tumble fight with a Scotch terrier in a bed of prize clematises, and end by a successful raid on the orchis-house, destroying an irreplaceable plant for every blossom you pluck, you will find that thirty pounds won't go very far, and that no conscientious gardener will stay with you. Anne had done all this, and more.

Silcote got the head-gardener to withdraw his resignation; and then, keeping hold of Anne's hand, passed on to the stable-yard without having attempted any remonstrance with her. If she had burnt the house down it would have been just the same. As he stood at that time he was a perfect fool. Hard hit, years and years ago, in a tender place, he had, as he expressed it, "fled from the world,"—from the world which was spinning all round him. He had brought himself to confess that he had been unjust and hard to this child's father, and he was, in his way, atoning for it by ruining the child by over-indulgence, as he had ruined her father by selfish ill-temper. It is hardly worth talking about. When a man takes to revenging himself on the whole world for the faults of one or two by withdrawing himself into utter selfishness, his folly takes so many forms that it gets unprofitable to examine them in detail. Let us leave Silcote reading his Heine and his Byron, and let him, as much as possible, speak for himself in future.

Novels must be interesting now-a-days, and the inner life of a man, who is everlastingly bellowing out the great everlasting *I*, is not interesting. A man's "family"—to use a word taken from Mr. Lewes's witty account of his transcendental friend—is but a dull business. Let us clear the ground by saying that Silcote conceived himself to have suffered an inexpiable wrong, that he had nursed and petted that wrong instead of trying to forget and forgive it, and that he had brooded so long over his original wrong that, on the principle of *crescit indulgens*, he had come to regard everything as a wrong, and very nearly to ruin both his life and his intellect. Well did the peasantry call him the "Dark Squire." The darkness of the man's soul was deep enough at this time, and was to be darker still; but there was a dawn behind the hill, if it would only rise, and in the flush of that dawn stood Arthur and Anne. Would the dawn rise over the hill, and flush Memnon's temples, till he sang once more? Or would the dark, hurtling sand-storms always rise betwixt the statue and the sun, until the statue crumbled away?

Wherever Anne went that morning she was naughtier and naughtier. In the fowl-yard she hunted the largest peacock, and pulled out his tail; and, if she behaved ill in the fowl-yard, she was worse in the stable, and worse again in the kennels. She carefully put in practice all the wickedness she knew,—luckily not much, but, according to her small light, that of a Brinvilliers, unrestrained by any law, for her grandfather never interfered with her, and her uncle Arthur was miles away. Children can go on in this way, being very naughty with perfect good temper, for a long time; but sooner or later petulance and passion come on, and hold their full sway until the child has stormed itself once more into shame and good behavior. As one cannon-shot, or one thunder-growl, will bring down the rain when the storm is overhead, so, when a child has been persistently bad for some time, the smallest accident, or the smallest cross, will bring into sudden activity the subdued hysterical passion, which has, in reality, been the cause of a long system of defiant perversity.

Anne's explosion, inevitable, as her shrewd father had seen with some cynical accuracy in this way.

At the kennel she had asked for a Scotch puppy as a present; and, of course, her grandfather had given it to her. She had teased and teased ever since, until at last, when they had got to the end of a narrow avenue of clipped yews into the forest, and had turned homewards, she saw the dog so much that it turned and bit her.

She was on the homeward side of her grandfather's garden, and came running back to him, to put in a child's universal first method of obtaining that of telling the highest available person a lie. "I'll tell mamma," or "I'll tell you," as sure as you are born: who has not heard two sentences often enough? The puppy, Anne; and she, white with rage, ran back to her grandfather.

"He has bit me, grandpa. You must have him bite me. The woman saw him, for I saw her bite him."

"The woman?" said Silcote, "what woman?" He turned as he spoke, and found himself face to face with the woman,—Mrs. Sudgen, who had come out of the forest end of the alley, and was now close to him.

Very beautiful she was, far more beautiful than he had thought when he had seen her first. Her features were perfect, without fault; the complexion though browned with field labor, so clear; the pose of the body, and the set of her features, so wonderfully calm and strong. Her gray eyes were not on him, though he could see them. They seemed to Silcote the eyes of a saint, sending rays of pity and wonder upon the poor child, as indeed they were. And, while he looked at this common laboring woman, with the cheap cotton gown, turned her large gray eyes on the great Squire; and in those eyes he saw perfect fearlessness, and infinite kindness; he saw more than the eyes could show him. His eye, as a vehicle to carry one man's soul to another, has been lately very much overrated; Silcote's barrister, knew this very well; the eye to him was a good and believable eye, but what said the brows? Their steady expansion told him of firmness and honesty, forming an ugly contrast to the eyebrows he saw in the glass every morning. He said the mouth? Strength and gentleness. He said the figure? Strength, grace, and wild, irascible purpose in every line of it.

So she was in silence and repose: in speech action how different! How reckless she was in how rude and whirling the words!

"Silcote, you are making a rod for your own back by your treatment of that child. She'll live to tell your heart for you. Why do you not correct her?—Come here, child; what is the matter?"

The astonished child came and told her.

"You should not have teased him, then. He is naughty, and should be punished. Silcote, you let me walk and talk with you?"

"Yes, if you won't scold me. You made a tirade the last time I spoke to you about the dog of our order. I wonder you are not afraid to walk with me."

"I am neither afraid of you nor of any other person. I certainly am not afraid of you because you were originally not a very bad man, but have only come to your present level by your unutterably selfish conceit. That there is no end of mending you now I am quite aware: but I

to ask you a great favor,—a favor which you trouble and money. Mend your ways once, and grant my request, and after—

to the deuce, hey?"

to means. I mean something quite different it. You have not, I believe, done an un-thing for twenty years. Five-and-twenty is the mark; you have been eating your own and reproducing your own nonsense, ever ur first wife's death. Make a change. Do favor, and it will become easier to you to rs. In time, if you live long enough, you a man again. Come!"

as not a bit surprised at her tone. She had him at his first interview with her, but that had worn off. Let a man for twenty years nself into a circle of perfectly commonplace ts and thoughts, the outside edge of that cir-become too solid to be easily broken. New ew phenomena, new ideas, may indent that edge; but the old round whirls on, and, be-e "wheel has come full circle" again, the gone, as, in a fused planet, some wart of an ve volcano is merely drawn to the equator, aving one of the poles flattened to an unap-ple degree. Mrs. Sugden, like Arthur, had the outside edge of his selfishness. He soon a accustomed to both of them. The globe rel- intact; either there must be an internal ion, or it would spin on forever.

answered her without the least hesitation or e. She was only a strong-minded woman in , with a deuce of a tongue, and a history: y a queer one, though she said it was n't. s a new figure, and to a certain extent odd, s last recollections of life were in a court of nd he had seen odder figures there. He was tly content that she should walk up and down rden with him, speaking on terms of perfect ty. Besides, she was clever, and bizarre, and ed answering, and after so many years he had red of worrying his sister; and it was a new ion to have a clever woman to face, who give scorn for scorn, and not succumb with erating good nature.

ou say you are come to ask a favor, the grant- f which will cost trouble and money. I love y, and hate trouble. You have gone the g way to work."

am sorry for that, Silcote, because the thing I done must be done, and you must do it. I must have it done. Therefore, if you will be enough to point out how I have gone wrong, I follow your directions and begin all over again; you must do what I require. If you grant as you must, I will go to work in any way you se to dictate."

can't go on twisting words about with a wo- who not only commits for herself *ignoratio hi* and *petitio principii*, in the same breath, but invents and uses some fifty new fallacies, never nt of by Aristotle or Aldrich. What do you t done?"

You remember a conversation we had the week re last?"

There she goes. There's your true woman. ates every law of reason and logic; then, when put her a plain question, asks you whether you ember a conversation you had with her the k before last. No, I don't legally remember : conversation. I would perish on the public

scaffold sooner than remember a word of it. I ask you what you want me to do, and I want an answer.

"Do you know my boy?"

"No."

"You do."

"Then, as I never contradict a lady, I lie. But I don't all the same."

"You came after him the week before last, and you wanted him for a groom."

"That may be, but I don't know him. I have seen more of the Lord Lieutenant than I have of him; but I don't know the Lord Lieutenant, and I don't want to. He is a Tory, and I never know Tories. How do I know that your boy is not a Tory? Now, what do you want of me?"

"I wish you would leave nonsense, Silcote, and come to the point."

"I wish you would leave beating about the bush, and come to the point."

"I will. You do know my boy, Squire, don't you?"

"There she goes again. I knew she would. Who ever could bring a woman to the point? No, I don't know your boy. I have told you so before. I ask you again, what do you want with me?"

"We shall never get on like this," said Mrs. Sugden.

"I don't think we shall," said Silcote. "But come, you odd and very queerly-dressed lady, confess yourself beaten, and I will help you out of your muddle."

"I shall do nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Sugden.

"Then we have come to a hitch. We had better come into the garden and have some peaches."

She was silent for a moment, and then she took his hand. "Squire," she said, "for the first time in twenty-five years will you be serious,—will you be your old and better self? Instinct partly, and rumor partly, tell me that you were not always the wicked and unhappy man as you are now. Help me, Silcote, even though I come asking for help with strange, rude words in my mouth. Throw back your memory for forty years, before all this miserable misconception arose; try to be as you were in the old, old time, when your mother was alive, and that silly babbling princess-sister of yours was but a prattling innocent child,—and O Silcote, help me, I am sorely bestead!"

She laid her delicate, though brown right hand in Silcote's right, as she said this, and he laid his left hand over hers as she spoke, and said, "I'll help you." And so the past five-and-twenty years were for the moment gone, and there rose a ghost of a Silcote who had been, which was gone in an instant, leaving an echo, which sounded like "Too late! Too late!" He held still the hand of this peasant-woman in his, and the echo of his last speech, "I will help you," had scarcely died out among the overarching cedars.

"I know you will. I knew you would. Listen, then. We have had a long and happy rest here, in the little cottage in the beech forest. You have known nothing of us, but you have been a good landlord, and we thank you. I fear the time has come when we must move forward again, and the world is a wide and weary place, Squire, and I am not so young as I was, and we are very, very poor: but we must be off on the long, desolate road once more."

"Stay near me, and I will protect you."

"Nay, that cannot be. It is my boy I wish to plead for. I cannot condemn him to follow our fate. I must tear my heart out and part with him. O my God! what shall I do? What shall I do?"

The outbreak of her grief was wild and violent for a time, and the Squire respected it in silence. The child now rambling far away among the towers for a moment, wondered what her grandfather had said to make the strange woman cry.

"I will not allow him to be a domestic servant; but see, you are a governor of St. Mary's Hospital. Give him, or get him, a presentation there, and he is made for life. It is a poor, innocent little thing, Squire, but I have educated him well for his age, and he is clever and good. Let me plead for him. What a noble work to rescue one life from such a future as will be his fate if he remains in our rank of life! And a mother's thanks are worth something. Come, rouse yourself, and do this."

"I will do it, certainly," replied the Squire. "But think twice before you refuse all offers of assistance from me."

"I cannot think twice; it is impossible."

"Your boy will be utterly separated from you. Have you thought of that?"

"Yes. I have resolutely inflicted that agony on myself, until use has deadened the pain."

"Have you reflected that it will be a severe disadvantage to your son for his companions to know that his parents are of such a humble rank in life, and that therefore you should not go and see him there?"

"I have suffered everything except the parting. If I can bear that I shall live."

"Your son's path and yours separate from this moment. As years go on the divergence will be greater, so that death itself will scarcely make a parting between you. Are you resolute?"

"I am quite resolute. Spare me."

"I will. God help you on your weary road, since you will take no help from man. Good by."

Silcote had given his last presentation to St. Mary's to his butler's boy, and he had no presentation to give. His time would not have come for years. But he said nothing about this, and never asked himself whether Mrs. Sugden was aware of the fact or no. Fifty pounds will do a great deal, — even buy a couple or four votes; and the next boy presented to the board of governors of St. Mary's was little James Sugden. The iron gates shut on him, and the old world was dead; only a dream of freedom and hardship. Instead, was a present reality of a gravelled yard, bounded by pointed windows; of boys who danced round him the first few days, and jeered at him, but among whom he found his place soon; of plenty to eat and of regulated hours. A good, not unkindly place, where one, after a time, learnt to be happy and popular. A great place, with the dim dull roar of the greatest city in the world always around it; bounded by the tall iron gates, outside which one had once seen a tall gray figure standing and watching. There was the new world of emulation and ambition inside those gates, but there was an old world outside which would not get itself forgotten for months. So that at times James awakened in his bed in the dark midnight, and cried for his mother; but time goes fast with children, and the other boys pelted boots and hard things at him, and laughed at him, which was worse. In six months the mother was only a dim old dream, dead enough still, but very old, getting nearly forgotten. Would you have

it otherwise? I would, but the wife can No.

And at home! How fared the poor, mother in this case? O you children! you can have you any idea of your own unutterable misery? And, to make you more utterly selfish, give you cakes and bright half-crowns, wine and eat and spend while the poor mother at home sleepless. One of the most beautiful touches in the most beautiful book, "Tom Brown" (a book only yesterday was as fresh and as good as the infinite grief of Tom when he finds that letter has not been sent, and that his mother have thought him faithless to his last solemn promise for three days. Little bitter griefs like Maggie Tulliver starving her brother's rabbit, Van Brunt falling down the ladder and breaking his leg, seem, it is pleasant to reflect, to affect the public quite as much as the fiercest tragedies. Tom Brown was no ordinary boy, any more than Maggie Tulliver was an ordinary girl. Children, in the most part, are selfish. James Sugden was a very ordinary boy, either; but in the new hurry-panic which he found himself thrust, where every hand was good-naturedly against him, his selfish image was gone from his mind but very few days after her body had passed away from the gates. In the watches of the night this dearly-loved came back to him, and proved that she might be forgotten in the daytime, with all its love and ambition, yet she was as dearly loved in his most heart as ever.

James Sugden the elder sat, in the evening, at the door of his cottage, sadly, with his face buried in his hands. It was a solemn September evening: the days were drawing in, and the chilly air, and the few first golden boughs, told of the long winter which was coming. The Oxfordshire wolds were getting dim, and the western reaches in the river were tinting crimson, when along the valley below a column of steam fled swiftly, and a little train crossed a bridge, and into a wood, and was gone. Then he arose, and, having made some preparations, went out and watched again.

Not for long. Far across the broad, darkening landscape his keen sight made out a figure advancing steadily towards him. The footpath crossed the broad fields at different angles, and sometimes the figure was lost behind hedges, or outstanding pieces of woodland, but he was sure of its identity, and sure that it was solitary. It was lost to his sight when it entered the denser forest which fringed the base of the hill; but he knew which way it would come, and advanced across the open glade to meet it. He was at the stile when Mrs. Sugden came out from the wood, tired, pale, and dusty with her walk to Twyford, and she put her arm round his neck and kissed his cheek.

They fenced a little at first. James said, "I thought you would come by that train. I saw it by, and watched for you."

"It is a nice train. It's express, you know; the country gentlemen have made them drive in their carriage at Twyford; but there is no third class, and that makes eighteenpence difference, and the money is running so very short. And so you see the branch train run along, did you? I would like to come to Shiplake; the walk is nearly as great, and there's the getting across the river."

And so they fenced, as they were walking together towards their cottage. As a general rule, women are braver than men; but on this occasion James

he greater valor, by introducing first the easiest to both their hearts. He said, "You must come about it."

He said, "It is all over."

"Not quite, sister. I want to know how off. Come. Only one more tooth out, sister. I want to know how the boy went off. Now or never, while the wound is raw and fresh; and then it will be a matter alone forever."

"You will have it, Jim, he went off very well. Deal; quite as much as you'd expect any man who believed that he was going to see her again in a fortnight. I told him so, my dear! Sent his love to you; is that any more? Now, it's all over, and I wish to have done."

"You've been a kind and loving brother to me, as God knows, and I have been but a sister to you. I have worried you from pillar to post, from one home to another, until I thought I had found one here. And now I have to say to you, my dear brother, 'Toodle once more.' Yes, my dear brother! If I could only see you with a good wife, now; you have been so kind and so true, you have given up so much for

very few days afterwards, the steward was waiting at his door, in the early dawn, when the messenger came towards him, and left the key of their room, paying up some trifle of rent. They were fitted for travelling, he noticed, and had large cases. Their furniture, they told him, had been sent away by the village broker, and the fixtures had been found all right. In answer to a wondering inquiry as to where they were going, James merely said eastward, and very soon after they entered a morning fog, bending under their bundles, and lost to sight.

CHAPTER XI.

THUS SILCOTE MAKES THE VERY DREADFUL AND ONLY MIASCO OF HIS LIFE.

FOR two years there was no change worthy of notice, save that the muddle and untidiness in Easter Square grew worse instead of better. Algernon's health suffered under the hopelessness, which ever grew more hopeless as time went

Dora had grown into a fine creature, pretty as a picture with the universal prettiness of youth, but threatening to grow too large for any great beauty. Beggy had, likewise, grown to be a handsome, delicate-looking youth: with regard to the other two we need not particularize. The pupils had been succeeded by two fresh ones, one of whom, a bright lad of sixteen, by name Dempster, was staying over Christmas vacation, — his father having returned to India, — and supposed himself to be desperately in love with Dora, who received his advances with extreme scorn.

Old Betts was there still, not changed in the least, but the outward eye. He used to go to the city every day, look into the shops, and come home again; at least that was all he ever seemed to do; but it turned out afterwards that sometimes some of his old friends would, half in pity, half in contempt, throw into his way some little crumbs in the way of commission. Betts had carefully hoarded these sums, and kept his secret from Algernon, nursing it with great private delight until that morning; but Algernon's worn look had drawn it from him prematurely.

He had been accumulating it for years, he told Algy, and there it was. He had meant to have kept it until it was a hundred pounds, and have given it to Algernon on his birthday. But it had come on him that morning that it lay with him to make the difference between a sad Christmas and a merry one; and who was he to interpose a private whim between them and a day's happiness? So there it was, ninety-four pounds odd; and it was full time to start across for church, and the least said, the soonest mended. Algernon had said but little, for he was greatly moved, and he preached his kindly, earnest Christmas sermon with a cleared brow and a joyful voice which reflected themselves upon the faces of many of his hearers, and gladdened them also.

Algernon had been vexed and bothered for some time about his Christmas bills. This contribution of Mr. Betts towards the housekeeping relieved him from all anxiety, and made a lightness in his heart which had not been there for years. Firstly, because he found himself beforehand with the world, and, secondly, because it showed him Betts in a new light. Mr. Betts had been vulgar, ostentatious, and not over-honest in old times, — had been cringing and somewhat tiresome in the later ones. But he had distinctly and decidedly done a kind action in a graceful and gentlemanly way.

Anything good delighted Algy's soul; and here was something good. He and Betts were an ill-assorted couple, brought together by the ties of chivalrous kind-heartedness on the one hand, and of sheer necessity on the other; and this action of Mr. Betts drew them closer together than they had ever been before. It reacted on Betts himself with the best effects. It removed that wearing sense of continual humiliating obligation, which too often, I fear, makes a man hate his kindest friend; and caused him to hold his head higher than he had held it for a long time. As he told Algernon over their modest bottle of sherry after dinner, when the children had gone to the Regent's Park to see the skaters, he felt more like a man than he had ever felt since his misfortune. When Algy said, in reply, that he thanked God that his misfortune had been so blessed to him, he did not speak mere pulpit talk, but honestly meant what he said. If you had driven him into a corner, he, I think, with his inexorable honesty, would have confessed that what he meant was, that Betts, although he still dropped his h's and ate with his knife, was becoming more of a gentleman, — consequently more of a Christian, — consequently nearer to the standard of Balliol or University. Algy's Christianity was so mixed with his intense Oxfordism, that to shock the latter was, I almost fancy, for a moment to weaken the former. Who can wonder at it? Three years of perfect happiness had been passed there. Alma Mater had been (forgive the confusion of metaphor) an Old Man of the Mountain to him, and had admitted him into Paradise for three years. He was bound to be a mild and gentle Assassin for her for the rest of his life.

We must leave him, in the beams of the first sunshine which had fallen on him for some years, to follow the very disorderly troop that posted off, with their early Christmas dinner in their mouths, to see the skaters in the Regent's Park. They were a very handsome, noisy, and disorderly group, and the inexorable laws of fiction compel me to follow them, and use them as a foil; because their leader, Miss Lee, was louder, more disorderly, and a hundred times more beautiful than the whole lot of them together.

If she had been less thoroughly genial and good-humored it would have been (for some reasons) much better. If she had been less demonstrative in the streets it would have been much better. If she had been less noisy and boisterous, it would have been a great deal better still. If she had not been so amazingly beautiful, one could have excused all her other shortcomings. But here she was, and one must make the best of her: beautiful, attractive, boisterous, noisy; ready at any moment to enter into an animated and friendly discussion with a policeman, or for that matter a chimney-sweep: with a great tendency to laugh loudly at the smallest ghost of a joke, and perfectly indifferent as to whether she stood on the pavement, in the gutter, or in the middle of the road. There she was, in short, her real self; as she was at that time. A mass of kindness, vitality, and good-humor; half spoilt by her imperfect training, and further spoilt by the respectful indulgence she had been used to in Algernon's house; but as clever as need be.

"I can't think why it is," said Algernon once, in answer to a remonstrance of Arthur's about this young lady (little he knew what was in store for him). "She was not boisterous when she first came to me. There was not a quieter girl anywhere. She can't have learnt to be noisy from me. I am sure I ain't a noisy man."

But Miss Lee had had the bit between her teeth so long that at all events she was very noisy. And she had another *specialité* which I think is common to all young ladies of excessive vitality and good-humor, who are not accustomed to control of any kind. If she saw any one of either sex doing anything, she must straightway, on the spot, do that thing herself. On their first starting, for instance, Dempster, the pupil, illegally, and in defiance of Her Majesty's peace, throne, and government, &c., &c., went down a slide. Miss Lee promptly essayed to do the like, regardless of time or place. Now the three or four winters which Miss Lee had passed in London had been mild, and sliding is not an art practised in Devonshire; firstly, because in nine years out of ten there is no ice there, and secondly because, when there is, its inclination—in consequence of the peculiar formation of the country—may, I believe, be scientifically described as that of the hypotenuse of a tallish right-angled triangle, with one of the sides containing the right angle parallel to the horizon. From whatever reason, however, Miss Lee had never tried sliding before, and so came down on the back of her head in the street, and began to think that she was enjoying herself.

With her kindly, uncontrollable vivacity, in the brisk winter air she became more "berserk" as she went on. She was only twenty or so, and life was a very glorious and precious possession to her. An honest, innocent, childish creature, who had only lately found out that she was a child no longer, and wanted a lover whom she could tease and make run about for her. She knew how to treat lovers from an infinite number of novels; only she had not got one yet. She wanted one sadly; what woman does not? She was not utterly unconscious of her wonderful beauty, and she was thinking on this very afternoon, whether Dempster, the pupil, was not old enough to be made a fetch-and-carry lover of: and she came to the conclusion that he was not old enough to stand it, and that she might still find a rival in raspberry tarts. This day, for the last time in her life, she was nothing more than a wild school-girl. Remember that she had no mother, no culti-

vation, and for three or four years no control whatever. If she was an unworthy person, she would not be mentioned here.

It is not necessary to follow Miss Lee and charge through their long afternoon's walk. It can be funny; but we don't want to be funny. Even to say that, what with good health, good beauty, youth, and a natural enough carelessness of appearance, she committed a hundred small indiscretions, and arrived home by much the most boisterous party. And, after a short, scrambling, and tea, they all took to blind-man's-buff as a sedate occupation.

When every one had got more tangled and excited than ever; when Algernon was laughing and splitting his sides; when Mr. Betts, intensely interested and enthusiastic, had, as blind man, walked head to the fire and burnt himself, under the belief wickedly suggested, that Miss Lee was up the chimney; then Miss Lee herself proposed that they should have a view to rest and quiet themselves before the per and snap-dragon—should have a game of hide-and-seek all over the house. It was voted by acclamation; and, during the exclamations, one of the junior Silcotes, who are practically out of the world, fell down stairs, with such a thumping of his body on the stair-carpet, such a rattling of the equally soft head of him against the banister, such a clatter of loose stair-boards which he trod after him in the catastrophe, then they were silent for nearly five seconds, until his frantic father dashed down, and found him lying in the hall, hurt, under the impression that he had dislocated himself, and done the thing of the evening! Then they began their hide-and-seek.

Mr. Betts hid first; but Dora contemptuously walked up to him, and took him from behind the scullery door. Then Reginald hid, and with amazing dexterity got home into the front parlor through the folding-doors which connected that room with his father's study, which was the back parlor on the first floor (perpend it for yourselves in a twelve-roomed house; you will find it come right, for I say it. I might describe the spreading of bread and butter, or the baking of cakes, but I must not do so on a game of hide-and-seek). After this, Dora hid, but Dempster the pupil had found her, and the rest of them found that Dora had lost her temper. A rude boy, I fear, that Dempster, though none of them said anything about it afterwards. Perhaps an ill-achieved kiss may be worth a sound box on the ears, and a week's sulks. That is a matter which only the first parties are concerned. Then when confusion and fun were rapidly growing so mad hurly-burly, it became Miss Lee's turn to hide.

At this time, also, it became Arthur Silcote's turn—after having preached for, and also dined with a Balliol man in the neighborhood—to step across to his brother to see how he was getting on, to knock at the door, to be admitted instantly by a grinning maid-servant, and, on inquiring about the niece in the house, to be told, by that confused and delighted young person, that they were playing at blind-man's-buff, and that his niece, Miss Dora, was at that moment hiding behind the study curtains.

I dread going on. I am afraid of telling the awful catastrophe which followed. It is very dreadful, but there is not a bit of harm in it, and it might happen to any one to-morrow. Arthur knew his way perfectly well; and he, the preux chevalier of Balliol, the man who was considered a perfect pig about women among men quite as particular as he then and there, believing that it was his little niece

lugged out Miss Lee from behind the curtain, called her his dear little pussy, and then, putting his two hands behind her waist, jumped her across the door, just as Dora and the whole party were in with a candle, Dora saying, "Don't tell I know she is here." She was indeed. And as her uncle.

CHAPTER XII.

TWO MORE GUESTS.

NEC coram," &c. Let us not follow out the details of a great catastrophe till it becomes familiar and ridiculous. Honest Jules Janin gave us a lesson about that years ago in his *Femme Guille*, by which lesson no one seems to have profited, any more than from Horace's *Ars Poetica*, the ten years' clause of which he violated twice a year he least.

The most awful part of the accident remained a found secret. All that the astonished Dora and the rest of the children saw, was that Miss Lee and her uncle were alone together in the dark, and that they were both the color of that rose which she saw at Silcotes as "General Jacqueminot." Dora was a little, but thought the more: all she said was, "Why, you are all in the dark here. Uncle, how do you get in?" After which they all went upstairs, the younger ones shouting all together to their mother and grandfather, how they had found Miss Lee and Uncle Archy alone in the dark in the study.

Miss Lee was not present, and Algernon rallied his mother right pleasantly. Archy replied that it was an accident, but so very awkwardly, that Algernon, being conscious of the magnitude of the disaster, ought how very shy about women university life as apt to make men otherwise perfectly self-possessed.

When Miss Lee reappeared at the supper-table, finding in the two youngest children, the blushes of a blazed out of her beautiful cheeks. She was nicely dressed, in a well-cut, quiet dress; not that it is of much consequence to such radiant beauty as hers (as Dr. Holmes so prettily says, anything almost will do to cover young and graceful curves). The dinner was banded up, and nothing was left of the late disorder. In the expression of her face, her attitudes, and her air, she combined the dignified humility of the governess with the melancholy pride of the gentlewoman of fallen fortunes; the modesty of extreme youth, with the consciousness of a beauty which in her humble circumstances was a vexatious annoyance to her, and with which she would gladly have dispensed. Nothing was ever better done. The worst of it was, that it was thrown away on a very one except Dora, whose eyes grew wider with wonder while she looked and remembered the indiscretions of the morning walk. "You would not come in at the beginning of the second lesson, if he was reading prayers, my lady," said that shrewd young person to herself.

But all this exquisite moral "get up" was lost on Arthur for a time. He did not even notice the courtesy and look with which she greeted him: an inclination made with dropped eyelids, which expressed humility, dignity, and a forgiving sense of injury received (for she knew well enough that he had complained of her being noisy: secrets are not long kept in a house so untidy as that of Algernon's). He never looked at her. He had not seen

her for some time, and had never observed her closely, being very shy of looking at women. He now regarded her as an objectionable and fast-going person, in whose power he had put himself utterly; whom, by a horrible combination of evil stars and evil influences, he had kissed in the dark, called his pussy, and jumped up and down. If she would only have complained to Algy, he could have apologized and explained, but she would not. As a gentleman he had to keep the dreadful secret, and he almost hated her.

I should be inclined to say that it was very difficult to hate anything really beautiful and good very long, if the aforementioned good and beautiful thing gives you anything like an opportunity of appreciating and admiring it. Miss Lee gave Arthur every opportunity of admiring and appreciating her, though Arthur upset her arrangements by not looking at her. Dora looked at her, however, even before supper, and looked at her so long, and with such an expression of wonder in her face, that Mr. Betts asked her what she was gazing at. She replied, "At Miss Lee," and Miss Lee heard her.

"Why are you looking at Miss Lee so strong, dear?"

"I was wondering whether she had been hurt on the slide this morning," answered Dora.

"If I had been, my love," answered Miss Lee, "I should have gone to bed."

There was such an awkward emphasis on the word *bed* that Dora felt that she was not quite Miss Lee's match yet, and had better hold her tongue. For there was no appeal against Miss Lee, in that house; and Miss Lee, in her position as governess, could send anybody to bed in five minutes. Dora, although in opposition to her governess, as a true British young lady is bound to be, had sense enough to hold her tongue and let things drive. "So you are going to set your cap at Uncle Arthur, are you, my lady?" she said to herself. "Good gracious, goodness me, how fine we are getting all of a sudden! Yes, indeed! O, quite so! Bed may be bed, my lady, but I have seen the last of French irregular verbs for some time, I fancy; unless I am a born fool, which I ain't; no, nor I won't be kept in over my colloquial French either, after this; and she trampolining away to Hampstead with the children, and Dempster, and riding donkeys, because I said, 'Il va pluvioir.'"

Dora was rebellious against Miss Lee, although they were the best friends in the world.

They had just sat down to supper when a new guest arrived.

A gallant-looking youth, with good features and fine, bold, intelligent eyes, dressed in a quiet but very becoming uniform. He stood behind Algernon's chair, waiting for recognition; and Dora saw him first, and called attention to him.

"My dear boy," said Algernon, turning kindly on him, "I had given you up. How late you are. You have lost all the fun, and we have had such a merry day. Come and sit by me. What made you so late?"

"We had anthem in chapel, this afternoon,—Purcell's. And the third master, Hicks, asked me, as a favor, to stay and help, and we always do anything for him. So I came by the six o'clock train."

"Well, here you are at last; make yourself as happy as you may. Sit beside me. Reggy, my boy, this is the new schoolfellow I told you of. He has promised to be your protector, my dear. Come and make friends with him."

Reginald looked for one moment at Dora, but Dora was ready for his telegraph, and left looking at the new-comer, and nodded twice or thrice shortly and rapidly at Reginald. The nod said emphatically, "He'll do": and Reginald went and sat beside him. Dora, the open-eyed, watched them. At first Reginald was a little shy, but soon, as far as she could see — for she could not hear — the stronger, older, and handsomer boy won him over by kindness of talk. Dora looked until Reginald took out his bran-new knife, and showed it to the strange boy. Then she said, "That's all right. Now let's see how you two other little people are getting on." The two people, whom she called "the two other little people," were not getting on at all. Her uncle and Miss Lee were at opposite sides of the table, and were not looking at one another. "If he were her director, I wonder if she would confess about the slide," thought Dora, and immediately found herself thinking about her dear grandpapa. Cynical snapping is very easy, and very soon caught.

But Dora found that youth, good-humor, and innocence were very pleasant things to contemplate, and so she looked at the two boys again, and her honest heart was satisfied. They had got their heads together now, and Reginald had got his peg-top and his string, and his dibbs and agate taws, out all round his plate of plum-pudding, and was showing them to the big boy in the uniform, who seemed to possess none of these treasures.

"He is poorer than Reggy," she said, "and how gentle and pleasant he looks! I like that boy."

And indeed he looked very likable indeed, in his quiet, manly dress, and his whole face beaming with kindness and pleasure.

There was some pleasant discussion about one of the large agate marbles, and the two boys appealed to Algernon, who sat radiant beside them. Reginald stretched across the strange lad, and pushed him against his father, so that his curly head was almost against Algernon's face. At the same moment a great brown hand was twisted gently into the lad's curls, and his head was pulled back until the owner of the hand could look down into the boy's face. At which time a loud, pleasant voice said, —

"Out of the way, curly-wig, and let us have a chance at your father. Algy, my dear old cock, how are you?"

There was a general rising and confusion. All sorts of notes composed the harmony which followed; but, from Mr. Betts's contented growl of "The Captain, by jingo!" down to the shriek of the smallest child from Miss Lee's kind arms, "Uncle Tom, what have you brought us!" the notes, discordant in sound, were the same in sentiment. They meant enthusiastic welcome to the ne'er-do-well and ne'er-to-do-better Captain Tom Silcote of Silcotes.

Algy was very much affected and touched. He never cried, even in his most pathetic sermon; but he had to stop sometimes, and he stopped now. When he had done stopping he said, —

"My dearest Tom! This is kind."

"I don't see it. Archy, boy, he says it's kind of me to come and get such a welcome as this. How are you, Betts? Miss Lee, my dear creature, you look — all right, Algy — Miss Lee, you look, you look — I don't know what the deuce you don't look like. There — there's no harm in that. Out of the way, you handsome young monkey, and let me get near your father."

"That is not my boy, Tom: that is a friend of Reggy's."

"Then 'not my boy, Tom, but a friend of Reggy's,' slope, and make love to Dora, if the young pepper-box will let you. Any way, give me the chair. The room smells of turkey; have it fetched back, Algy, I am as hungry as a hunter. Betts, there a good glass of sherry in the house? Hand your tongue, Algy, — what do you know about good sherry? See how wise old Betts looks all of a sudden. Six fingers is sixty! Nonsense, man; is your aunt Jane dead? A Christmas treat? All right, let's have a glass, then. Betts, old fellow, I want to talk to you on business. Archy, how are you and the other prigs getting on at Oxford?"

Arthur was not in good-humor with his brother. As fellow and tutor of Balliol, he had to do with fast men at that college, such as there were. As a pro-ctor, who was taking a somewhat peculiar line in the university, he had to do with fast men at other colleges, — very fast men; men who could be tolerated at Balliol for half a term. But his brother Tom was faster than any of them. Arthur had to do with many cases of fast lads. The last was that of a servitor at Christ Church, who had been hunting in pink, and owed £500 (a real case). Arthur had seen to this lad's affairs, and had compounded with his creditors for about eighteen years' penitence. I mean that he was to deny himself every luxury and pleasure for some eighteen years, to pay off the debts, with the interest on them, which he had contracted in one year among wine-merchants, livery-stable keepers, and grooms. What will lads give over believing that hunting at five pounds a day is the summit of human happiness? When are the dons going to forbid fox-hunting?

But this servitor lad was penitent, and promised amendment. Tom was nothing of the kind. Arthur had been the agent between his father and his eldest brother in the last settlement of Tom's everlasting debts. He had taken to the Squire a schedule of Tom's debts, which he knew, by his dawning knowledge of the world, to be only a half statement; but he had taken it, and asked for payment. The sum was so fearful — eight thousand pounds — that he, brave as he was, knowing that sum was not all the reality, was frightened when he presented it. He did not recover his nerve until the Squire, in his cursing, cursed him as an accomplice. Then anger gave him nerve, and he resumed that old ascendancy over his father which his perfect rectitude had in the first instance given him, — feeling at the same time like a villain, because he was sure, in his innermost heart, that the schedule of Tom's debts was understated. The moment when Silcote the elder recovered from his furious indignation sufficiently to tell Arthur that he could trust him at all events, was probably the most bitter and the most degraded of his life.

The C. C. servitor had told the truth, and had been penitent; not that the penitence of that sort of young gentleman is of much use, unless they are steadily whipped in by a stronger hand and will. His brother Tom, as he knew perfectly, whenever he chose to know, had not told the truth, and that was not one halfpenny worth of penitence about him. So Arthur was in contemptuous variance with his brother. Tom's persistent wrong-doing and waste of life were to his mind inexplicable and hateful; and, moreover, Tom had outstepped an arbitrary line which the world lays down, and the world was beginning to talk. How long he might stay in his present regiment was very doubtful.

And so, not caring to look much at his brother

sia, or whatever they call that utter lowering of the system which arises from worry and anxiety, as well as from laziness and over-feeding. She worried herself to death after her fourth confinement, and left him slightly in debt, with a household in which anything like comfort and management had been banished five years before.

But it was home to them. They contrived to keep their muddle and untidiness to themselves. Algy was always well dressed on Sunday, and, since his misfortunes had begun, his sermons had acquired a plaintive and earnest beauty which they might have lacked before. The more weary life grew to him, the more earnest — sometimes the more fiercely eager — he got, on one point, — the boundless goodness and mercy of God. He gained power with his people. The very extreme party, both in and beyond the Established Church, allowed him great unction. His church was full, but there were but a limited number of sittings, and his four children were growing, and must be educated. So it came about that home became home to him no longer, — that it became necessary for him to give up his last and only luxury, privacy. It became necessary for him to take pupils.

It was his father-in-law Betts who pointed out to him this method of increasing his income. Betts was a bad specimen of the inferior kind of the London City speculator. He had all his ostentation, his arrogance, his coarseness, his refusal to recognize high motives (in which latter characteristic your peasant and your town mechanic are so often far superior to the man who leads him), while he was without his *bonhomie*, and his ready-handed careless generosity. Neither ostentation nor real careless good-will could ever make him subscribe liberally; the only large subscription he ever gave was that to Algy's, to his prospective son-in-law's testimonial; not a very nice man, by any means, — a man who seemed to Algy with his Oxfordism entirely made up of faults with no virtues, a man who grated on his dearest prejudices a hundred times a day, a man sent him for his sins. The horror of his being a bankrupt, the horror of anything connected with dear noisy old St. Paul's having gone into the Bankruptcy Court, was bad enough to make him renounce all communion with his old friends, and keep himself with lofty humility from the world; but after this the man, himself, remained on his hands, a deadly thorn in his side, annoying him all day long by his manners, his way of eating even, his everlasting allusion to his losses, and, more than all, by his clumsy expressions of gratitude, "the more offensive," said Arthur, who had not then been quite cured of griggishness, "because they are sincere."

For Betts's very numerous faults were more those of education and training than of nature; for if one cannot believe that some natures are more difficult to spoil than others, and that the *whole* business is a mere result of the circumstance of a man's bringing up, one would be getting near to believe nothing at all. The man's nature was not a bit changed, because Algy in his treatment of him scrupulously followed the directions given in the Sermon on the Mount. His nature remained the same, but all his old landmarks of riches and respectability had been swept away by his bankruptcy, and immediately after he saw, with his eyes cleared from all cobwebs, while in a state of humiliation, a man who acted on a law he had never recognized, hardly ever heard of, the pure law of Christianity. Not that he ever fully recognized it: perhaps he was too old. To the

very last, while alluding to Algy, he would say, "Sir, my son-in-law is the most perfect gentleman I ever saw, and a sincere Christian, sir. Yes, sir, a most sincere Christian, I give you my honor."

When Algy, for the first time in his life, found that he was actually pushed for money; when he found that the weekly bills were increasing, without the means of paying them; that although Reginald might be kept from school a little longer, yet that his darling eldest born, Dora, was growing vulgar, and imitating in her talk the maids, with whom she spent four fifths of the day, instead of him, with whom she spent about one fifth; then he thought it time to consult his father-in-law, whose knowledge of the world, he put it to him, might be most valuable.

"You see," said Algy, "that I am a mere child; I really am. Such small intellectual vigor as I possess" (he used this style of talk to Betts; he would have spoken very differently to a university man) "is used up by my sermons. I ask you, — you will smile at my simplicity, — what does a man in my position do to increase his income?"

"Are you quite sure," said Mr. Betts, somewhat huskily, "that you would do better by increasing your income?"

"It is absolutely necessary, I fear, my dear sir," said Algy. "I must have a good governess for Dora. Our confidence is mutual, I believe, and I cannot conceal from you the fact, that unless Dora has some lady to superintend her education, — well, I will cut it short, — that in fact she will not grow up a lady herself."

"Who the deuce wants her to be a lady? She won't have any money."

"My dear sir —"

"I brought up my girl for a lady, and she was no good, at least to you. I don't believe in girls, without one tithe of the prospects she had when you married her, being brought up as ladies. Governessing ain't any good, I tell you; they never make one and a half per cent on the money spent on their education, and the flower-making ain't much good now. They say the women are going to take to the law writing, but a friend of mine in the business says they'll never come it. Try that. But, Lord, see the various games I have tried to make a little money, and ease you. And see my success. I am a burden on you still."

"You are no burden, my dear friend. At least, if you ever had been, you could repay the whole of your obligation by pointing out to me the way to increase my income. I *must* have my children educated as gentlemen and ladies, and Reggy *must* go to school."

"Must he? I never went to school, but here I am, says you. Well, I won't dispute; but knowing what I do know, I'd apprentice him to a smith. Look here; your education cost two thousand pounds, first and last, and I don't deny that the investment was a good one. Three hundred a year for two thousand is a good investment. But then your friends had the money, and you turned out well, and you had luck in getting this church; whereas, in the case of Reggy, you ain't got the money, and he may turn out bad (which is deuced likely), and you nor no other man can be answerable for his luck. Therefore, I say, apprentice him to the smith's trade."

"I could not dream of such a thing."

"Of course you could n't. You're a gentleman, and I'll speak up for gentlemen as long as I live."

ditions. Sleeping on his cherished purpose, he awoke full of eagerness to carry it out, and started southward as soon as the gates were opened, on a bright summer's morning. His object was to reach a certain "Peerless Pool," which existed, and still I think exists, behind Lambeth, of which a boy, a friend of his, had told him; to bathe there, and return. He had plenty of money, — threepence, — and the distance could scarcely be more than four miles. The thing promised well, but it ended in complete disappointment. The boys in the immediate neighborhood had got used to the absurd and hideous green baize petticoats in which the St. Mary's boys were clothed, and knew that to bully a solitary one was to have the whole swarm about your ears; but as he got farther afield his clothes attracted still more attention, until at last advance became impossible. They would have no boys in green baize petticoats there. He was a boy who would fight, as we have seen before, but you can't fight an enemy numbering hundreds, in detail, one down another on. He lost nerve and ran at last, and was as a matter of course pursued; he managed at last to lose his pursuers, and himself also, in a maze of little streets; and by eleven o'clock he was back at the school, panting and wearied, with the hot tears of grief and indignation ready to break out when the time should come.

Tears did not come at first; anger and pride kept his eyes dry for a time; but a turn or two in solitude through the desolate whitewashed corridors, and the more desolate dormitories, threw the self which had asserted and forgotten itself in the cruelty and turmoil of the streets back upon self once more. And self sent back to self means utter isolation and hopeless misery. In children it produces a wild hysterical passion of tears, which rends the body until it deadens the sense of desolation in the mind; with grown men who cannot weep it is less merciful. Are there not suicides and madmen?

James, poor lad, after having failed utterly and miserably in his long-cherished expedition, — after having, in spite of his valor, been pummeled, beaten, and forced to fly to the only home he knew now, — made more miserable by the sight of those empty corridors and dormitories, went out into the wide, hot main quadrangle, and did what nature told him to do, — cried himself to sleep against the pump. The pump was close to the board-room window, and there was a board to-day; but it was as good a place as another.

He fell asleep, and he had a dream, very much like other dreams; that is to say, a perfect farrago of nonsense. Every one he had ever known in his life — and a few more, such as Robinson Crusoe, the Sleeping Girl of Trumpington, the late Mrs. Shipton, Governor Picton, Richard the Third, and Julia Manning, whom he had only known from books — were all assembled at Silcotes, none of them either doing or saying in the least what they ought or what they wanted.

The only point in common which they had, from Robinson Crusoe to the steward's-room boy, was that they were all waiting for Dark Squire Silcote. He put in an appearance at last, but in that unsatisfactory way common to dreams. He never really appeared: he only spoke, in an awful voice, at the sound of which every one bolted, and the boy awoke. What the Dark Squire said was, "Sir Hugh Brockliss is a fool, an ass, and a prig. If you set to work breeding fools, you must succeed sooner or later. The Brocklisses have been fools since the

Conquest, and they married his father to Lady Emily Llywellyn, and the Llywellyns have been fools since the Fall. Lady Eve Llywellyn was a woman who did the original mischief with the serpent. I have seen their pedigree at Glyn Dy. The man can't help being an ass, but I never beaten by horse or donkey yet. You had better look for that boy, Archy; it is a kind thing to do. Mr. Betts, we will not be beaten by the idiots. Now, if you will fulfil your promise, guide me to Lombard Street, I shall be obliged."

A dream and no dream. The boy had been lying in his dog's-sleep the voice of Silcote, grogged away in the committee-room for above half an hour, and his dream had fashioned itself accordingly. He awoke to see Silcote, whose figure he knew well, walking away across the hot, empty quadrangle, with a seedy, fat-looking old gentleman, — to see Sir Hugh Brockliss, whom he also knew well by sight, a governor, standing in the board-room doorway, scowling after him; and to find Arthur Silcote leaning over him, smiling.

"You little pea in a drum," he said, "I was coming to look for you. You and I are going out on a grand holiday together. Boy, you have been crying! Have they been ill-using you? Tell me the truth, without fear, now."

James told the truth. Every one about the hospital was most kind to him. But he told the story of his projected expedition, and its failure in consequence of his clothes.

Arthur set his teeth and stamped his foot. "We are going to change all that, boy," he said. "If the idiots will let us. And Sir Hugh Brockliss talks about the associations of the place. Come on, my child. Wash your face, and let you and me go down among the ships. We will mend all this for you, boy, and mend it soon, I hope. Leave that alone, and come with me."

In half an hour Arthur Silcote had his boy down among the ships at the East India Docks. And if you ever have a boy thrown on your hands, and if that boy finds himself bored by being taken down the river and shown the ships, why, don't undertake that boy again, for he is not worth the trouble.

James, after his morning's failure, passed after the golden day of his life. Arthur began by picking the poor little pea in the drum, and gave him to treat as a matter of duty. As a general rule, when he goes down the river does not choose a boy in green baize petticoats for his companion. Arthur took the boy as a mere matter of duty and kindness; but, before they had got far on their voyage, he found that he was not doomed by any means to pass the most unpleasant day in his life. The boy was such a queer boy. He was so strangely well-read, and yet so unutterably ignorant about the visible outside of things. The boy's general floating information was absurdly great. When he found himself fairly under Arthur's protection, and, having forgotten about his ridiculous dress, got confidential, he puzzled Arthur in fifty ways.

There were meetings of the board of governors twice a week now, and the attendance at these grew more numerous, and the debates more animated. He soon began to understand the matter.

Arthur Silcote had taken it into his head that the school should be moved into the country, and that their hideous dress should be replaced by a neat uniform and lighter shoes in which they could play. The whole thing was no business of his; he was a

y connected with the school; but he wished e, and, consequently, intended to do it, and, uently, did it. Granby Dixon was no good further reforms were left to the governors, of he knew only two, — his father Silcote, and atts, his brother's father-in-law, — a very poor to start with for accomplishing such a great tion. Yet they were two very good trumps. had become a governor in the time of his erity, and was a governor still, and would fight y to the death for anything bearing the name icote. He was safe, and moreover was as able try debater as could easily be found. Then ither! How to arouse his persistent bull-d acy and ill-temper in the cause was for a few a question. He had sufficient influence over ther to make him *move* in the matter; but it red something more than his influence to arouse rom so many years of laziness and selfishness, nake him persist. An old feud, about a worth- piece of covert, was the weapon he found in his after a few days' consideration. Sir Hugh kliss had crossed his father and gone to law him on this piece of copse. If there was a man than another whom his father hated, it was Hugh Brockliss. Sir Hugh was a Tory, another t point; and Sir Hugh had declared for keep- the school where it was, and the dress as it was, the grounds of the associations of the place. ur had only to go down to Silcotes, and point these facts to his father, when his father arose white heat of rage, and committed himself to question of moving the school and altering the s, as long as breath was in his body. He cared ing about it. But anger and personal spleen le him undertake a purpose, and stick to it with utmost tenacity until it was carried; while prin- e never would have moved him.

Arthur knew perfectly well that, by holding the rag of Sir Hugh Brockliss before his father's e, he would arouse all the bull-like pugnacity in father's nature, and get all his father's barriste- ability, and his unequalled powers of debate at back. Was he justified in arousing that long- sping volcano of shrewd logical scorn; in call- into activity the very worst part of his father's racter, — jealous, suspicious hatred of every one o crossed him, — even in such a good cause as this? by, no. But he did it without flinching. This ng had to be done, and therefore must be done, ickly and cheaply, and with the handiest materials. hat a narrow young Buonaparte it was at this ae!

"His father's own son," said the Princess once, le dreaming in her foolish head that she was, un- consciously of course, speaking the truth. They had their will. Sir Hugh Brockliss left off tending the board. Silcote's powers of logical orn, which in old times had promised to put him the head of one branch of his profession, were too uch for the honest, kindly country baronet. He rote a letter to the board, which he and his wife nsidered to be rather withering than otherwise. le deeply deplored that certain circumstances — he gretted to say, that his duty as an English gentle- an constrained him to admit — of a personal na- re prevented his sitting at that board again. When e said, as he did with his hand on his heart, that hat board, in its collective capacity, was as intelli- gent and as gentlemanlike a body of men as he ever oped to meet, he made one exception, — he regret- ed to say an individual one. He would not name

any names whatever. He would not point the fin- ger of scorn in any direction; but he put it to that board, whether, after the language he had received from an individual member of that board on Tues- day last, he could, with any sense of decency, fur- ther assist at their councils. Of that individual member he had no more to say. To that individual member, if he ever spoke to him again (a pleasure, he was bound to add, which he and Lady Brockliss had determined to forego), he should say that the term "pig-headed," although ostensibly applied to a political party, may be uttered with such distinctness of emphasis that it became personal.

This was Sir Hugh Brockliss's reply to Silcote's really fine irony. But they would not have won their game still, if it had not been for old Betts.

A row between terrible old Silcote and pompous, honest old Sir Hugh was very good fun; but it was not business. They represented the sentimental part of the affair; and, among a board of Philis- tine governors, most people will allow that senti- ment does not go for much. The Philistines were perfectly ready to clothe the boys decently; but the moving of the school into the country was quite an- other matter; it meant money.

Here old Betts came out nobly, backing the Squire with endless bundles of papers, which, egged on by Arthur, he had been secretly preparing; and endless rows of figures, calculations of rent, the price of land in the city, the price of land thirty miles from town. The figures were undeniable; the gain was very considerable to the institution. Over and above the cost of a poor tract of land in a romantic situation which they bought, they found they had a very large building-fund in hand. A clever architect was secured, with orders to *repro- duce* the school-buildings. In a year it was done, and, now that the beautiful mediæval building was removed from the crowded houses of the city, one could see how really beautiful the original design was.

At length there came the last holidays in the old place, and then the very last morning there. James was again alone at school, and awoke in the empty dormitory at daybreak. It was indeed the dawning of a new day and a new life for him.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. MARY'S BY THE LAKE.

THE new clothes which lay at his bedside, into which he put himself with the utmost rapidity, were the first thing which attracted him on this very memorable morning. He had never been dressed becomingly before; from a smock frock and heavy, ill-fitting boots he had passed to hideous and ridic- ulous green baize petticoats, with ill-fitting brass latched shoes, made of the worst leather; three sizes among two hundred boys. Now he found him- self standing alone in the deserted dormitory, in a short pilot jacket, with gold buttons, well cut shep- herd's-plaid trousers, nicely made shoes, fit to run a race in, and a pretty cap, with S. M. H. in gold on the forehead. He did not know that he was hand- some, and that he looked attractive in his new dress. He had no idea of that. He only knew that the old hideous nightmare of the green baize petticoats was gone forever, and that now he could walk the streets without being an object of scorn and ridicule to other boys. He *thought* that now he was only as other boys were, and would attract no

attention; the fact was, that from an object of contempt he had passed into being an object of envy. His intense pleasure at the transformation made him blush several times, and his intense modesty made him hesitate for a long time before he went down to the lodge. But, casting a parting look—with a somewhat regretful face after all, mind you—on the old whitewashed walls, and on the green baize petticoats and heavy shoes, which lay in a heap on the floor, he went down the stairs, and out into the gravelled quadrangle, whose western pinnacles—after doing duty, more or less faithfully, for four hundred years, condemned as old materials—were just lit up by the sun of the summer's morning.

Will you follow me through the brightest day in the life of a very good fellow, take him all in all? If you will, read; if you would rather not, skip. I wish to please you, but you do not know how difficult you are to please.

Nearly all the servants of the college had been sent on before, to get in order and arrange the new building, which was now, having had the March wind through it, pronounced to be dry and fit for the reception of pupils, and the working people necessary for their instruction in the fear of God, grammar, and plainsong. James was the only boy so utterly friendless and lonely as to be left up for the midsummer holidays, and he was to travel down with Berry, the old porter, and formally to take possession of the new building, in the name of the Society of the Hospital of the Blessed Virgin.

James and old Berry were great cronies. They squabbled at times, for James's vivacity now and then took the form of piratical, irritating mischief. But any boy who had broken a window in James's company was comfortably assured of one thing, that old Berry would never report James. What was deliberation on the part of any other boy was mere accident in James's case. The master who had the care of such little logic as they learnt had remarked once ironically, that Sugden's accidents appeared from their frequent recurrence to be inseparable, and might be more correctly described as qualities; but what third master, let him have expended a thousand pounds on his education, can ever hold his own against the porter? It is Seely against Packington. The porter wins, and James was never formally reported.

"Hi!" said old Berry, as James came into the lodge for his breakfast; "we are fine. How nice the boy looks though. You look the gentleman all over."

"I am a gentleman, ain't I?" said James.

"Not you," said Ben Berry. "If you had been you'd have been reported times out of mind. You're no gentleman. Where's your old things?"

"In the dormitory."

"Fetch 'em along."

"Why?"

"To keep 'em by you, to remind you that fine feathers don't make fine birds. I ain't been consulted about this new move myself; if I had been, I should have gone agin it most likely. Still, I likes the look on it pretty well this morning. But fetch they old things along, James Sugden, as was shepherd's boy. If you ever forget what you was, and forget the mother that has been going up and down in front of these gates many a time when you have been at football or marbles, I'll report you for the next window as sure as you are born."

"My mother?" said James.

"Ah! your mother!" said Ben Berry. "But

what the odds about she? Leastways now. You and I was always comfortable together, and we can say as I ever reported you. Come, get up breakfast, my dear boy. I have always stood by friend, James Sugden, and if I spoke strongest now, why I am an old man, and you young, tries us at times. But I never reported you, James, and you would n't desert me now."

"Desert you, Ben? I ain't going to desert you!"

"I know you would n't. I know you'll stay through this moving. I ain't moved from here. It's this lodge, for thirty years; and since then the pesky railways have turned up; and I'm stuck on 'em. Come, James, see me through to-day. I never reported you, and, by Job, if you get me down there, I never will, not if you were to put the place down under my nose. And you know you know; because, in a mind constituted like mine, there's the elements of as outrageous a young man as I've seen in thirty years. You sleep on my warning, my young friend."

"All right, Ben. I'll take you down safe enough."

The passengers by the nine o'clock train at Vauxhall could not help noticing with extreme interest the handsome, well-grown boy in the uniform, who so assiduously led about and attended to the fidgety, queer-looking old man in the uniform. Those who were early saw that the pair were friends for they had half a dozen comical squabbles together,—the old man going the wrong way systematically, and growling at everything, and the boy checking him and laughing at him. They were such a quaint, interesting couple; the joyous brightness of the brisk laughter of the boy contrasted so perfectly with the comical, good-humored cynicism of the old man, that a certain general, egged on by his wife, accosted them, to find out who they were.

"What uniform do you wear, my boy, and what are you going to?"

"The uniform of St. Mary's Hospital, sir, and I am going to Basingstoke," for there was a shyness or shame now,—that was all left behind with the green petticoat. And James was so smart, so brisk, and so bold on this crystal summer morning, that he would have spoken up to the Queen herself.

"You happy boy," said the General; "I wish, but for one thing, change places with you."

"And what is that thing, sir?" said James, with perfect innocence.

The General looked at his wife, and they laughed. "Come in the carriage with us, my boy," she said.

"I should like to," said James; "I should like to go anywhere with him," indicating the General by a nod; "but I have promised to take care of Ben Berry, and we are going third class."

"He will be all right," said the General. "Come with us, and I will pay the difference."

"No. I am much obliged to you. I never break my promises. Besides, he has been mewed up there so long, thirty years and odd, that he would be lost without me."

"How did he get on before he had you to take care of him, you very old and sagacious gentleman?"

"Well enough. Got from the stool to the gate and from the gate back to the stool, in the most perfect manner, for thirty odd years,—I should say, as far as I can judge, the most perfect school porter that ever lived. But he has got old, and wants a proper head to guide him; we shall all come to that

lay, I suppose. Your offer is very kind, but y must go and look after my friend."

"n't be too sharp, little man," said the Gen-
"What is your name?"

"ave I been talking too fast, sir?" asked
wistfully. "I think I am a little beside my-
is morning. My name, sir, is James Sugden.

a shepherd boy, and was presented to St.
s by Squire Silcote of Silcotes, to whom, in the
we owe the new change in the school."

aptain Silcote's father," said Mrs. General.
her husband added, "A bad family; well, I
lad he has been doing some good. He had

was high noon before this queer pair of travel-
arrived at their destination, and after driving
fly ten miles from Basingstoke, saw the dear
uilding, which they had left in London, before
again, reproduced perfectly, from the dormi-
windows down to the gargoyles and pinnacles
e chapel. Reproduced indeed; but in what a
ge way? What an astounding piece of magic
this! They had left the old building that
ing in London, hemmed in by ignoble houses
very side; in the hot noon they found it again,
ding on a lofty promontory, which thrust itself
into a beautiful lake. Behind the college, and
e right of it, the dark Scotch fir woods rolled
y, tier beyond tier, the building standing out
re them like some new-carved toy. In front
e was the lake, calm under the noonday sun;
all around, shutting out the horizon everywhere,
ed the hills, in sheets and scarps of purple bloom-
heather.

t was a wonderfully beautiful sight, — those who
e had the luck to see Mitchet Pond on the Ba-
stoke Canal may guess how beautiful. Very few
ple know the great beauty of those desolate
mpshire lakes, lying on the Bagshot Sanda-
ey have a *specialité* of their own, from Frimley to
wley, a distance of some seventy miles. All that
ropelessly poor soil, inferior forms of vegetation,
d solitude can do for one, they do. At times
y are romantic, as at Mitchet, and at this lake of
rley; but all of them, on the hottest summer's
y, suggest to one wild sweeping winter winds,
d warm winter ingle-nooks. The sounds of agri-
ltural life are seldom heard upon their desolate
argin. The bitterness startles some solitary cow in
flapping and noisy flight, and the snipe bleats in
e place of the lamb.

In this beautiful building, standing where the for-
t, the lake, and the moorland met, the lad spent a
ng, hot, solitary summer, the happiest of his life.
he solitude did him little harm, and the freedom
id him great good. For instance, in his long,
nely rambles over the great sea-like expanses of
eath, from one cape of forest to another, his work
f the last half came to him with a new meaning.
Virgil and Horace were not mere puzzles of scan-
ing, mere wearisome exercises of memory. In
hese long rambles he sometimes repeated the pas-
ages he knew, from sheer *ennui* or vacuity; he be-
gan to find their meaning, and by degrees to admire
them, and long that school might begin again, and
that he might know more of them. Of English
poetry he knew nothing; that was a later revela-
tion. He says now, in his fanciful way, that the
undoubted purity and beauty of his outline comes
from the fact that he had not debauched his soul
with post classical literature until he was nearly
seventeen. Probably the plain truth is, that he has

a keen, steady eye, and a keen, steady hand, and
that the kind, genial soul, which is inside the man,
acts on the dextrous eye and hand, and reproduces
itself. If he chooses to assert that correct drawing
can only be got at by an exclusive study of the
classics, let him say so. He is not the first man who
has talked nonsense about art, and, some of our
cynical friends may say, certainly not the last.

Whether she had been cruel or kind, he had al-
ways feared or admired Nature; but the fantastic,
broken prettiness of Berkshire had puzzled and con-
fused him. A kaleidoscope is one thing: a painted
window by Kaulbach at Cologne is another. In this
new Paradise he for the first time saw great simple
outlines, — long lines of forest, long horizons of
heather, sometimes at his farthest point southward
broken by the square tower of a great cathedral,
with the sea gleam beyond; and he essayed to
draw them, but could not, nor ever could to his
satisfaction. Amateurs generally begin their brief
career amidst mountain scenery: a mountain like
Schehallion or Mount Cervin would set nine men
out of ten to work to paint it. He had no such
luck; he tried to draw the dull, simple lines of the
Hampshire landscape, as being the first thing which
he recognized as drawable. He failed so utterly
that Ben Berry, the old porter, refused entirely to
recognize the landscape on any terms. And so
James, in spite, late one evening, in the lodge, sit-
ting, with his shoes and coat off, on the table, drew
old Ben himself, and did it uncommonly well, — at
least, so every one said except the new drawing-
master, who set him on at once at pitchers and
stiles.

In time summer flamed into autumn. The beds
were all made in the new dormitories; the new
organ was tuned ready for the first day's service.
The old masters had dined together in the new hall,
and had sniffed, with intense delight, the sweet air
of autumn from the Hampshire moors; and at last
the boys, wondering and delighted at their new
dress, and at the strange, beautiful Paradise in
which they found themselves, had come swarming
back. James was king among them. He had
mastered the new situation, and was always after-
wards referred to about cross-country business.
He fairly kept the lead he had taken. He had
learnt to swim during the holidays, and was almost
the only boy who could swim well. October was
mild that year; and on the first day, before the
whole school, he swam across the lake and back
again, and became for a time a hero among these
town-bred boys. It was little enough to do; they
could most of them do it the next summer; but it
gave him a temporary prestige, which was very
much increased by Squire Silcote sending him a
couple of sovereigns, when he was advised of this
wonderful Leander feat by a faithful friend of both
parties.

"You are now," said this faithful friend — Arthur,
of Balliol, who turned up here, as he did every-
where else, for no assignable reason — "fairly
launched. While you were dressed in those
wretched petticoats, I could not do you the in-
justice to introduce you to a certain pleasant
family, where there are boys and girls of your
own age. At Christmas you will be asked to my
brother's house, and will there see a side of life
which will be perfectly new to you."

Accordingly he paid his visit to Lancaster Square,
and after the Christmas holidays Reginald accom-
panied him back to school.

GARIBALDI AND KOSSUTH ARE STARTLED BY THE APPEARANCE OF MADAME GEORGET.

LEAVING now for a time the fresh and free English-like atmosphere of Purley Lake, I must ask my reader to accompany me into quite a different one: into the atmosphere which has been made by the collision between European courts and dynastic traditions and democracy combined with "the doctrine of nationalities." — which atmosphere, here in England, generally offers itself to the outward senses with a scent of seedy broadcloth and bad cigars.

Who is there among us who has not in his time met a political exile: who is there who has not met one whom he has admired, and got to like? They are bores, you say. Certainly their cause is a bore. Certainly, at odd times, when one is busy, Polish and Hungarian politics are a bore; and one does get sick, when one is otherwise employed, of being taken by the button, and having a fresh arrangement of the map of Europe laid before one in a shrill treble, the bass of which consists of a denunciation of the unutterable wickedness of England, for not, with a hundred and forty thousand men, hardly collected, and costing a hundred a year apiece, overrunning Europe with two million of soldiers, and enforcing at the point of the bayonet emancipation of nationalities, and what the Americans call a "Liberal Platform." The cause was always a bore to many of us, even while we loved them, for we most of us thought that cause hopeless, and they themselves were inclined to be bores; though, thank heaven, the Italians, at all events, by persistent boring, have got what they wanted. And, if you look at it, few great things are done without persistency, which means boredom for uninterested people. Look at the unjust judge. The very man whom I shall have the honor to introduce to you directly under the *nom de guerre* of Kriegsturm said to me, not so very long ago, "Revolution? yes, revolution. Failure once, twice, thrice, but always again revolution. The card must turn up some day."

Yet, in spite of their boring us, few of us who have known anything of them have not had occasion to admire their patience, their frugality, and their charity towards one another. Necessity had first thrown Boginsky the Pole and Count Aurelio Frangipanni the Italian together, and now their respect and friendship for one another, after seeing out so much grinding poverty together, was so great, that to injure one was to arouse the dangerous anger of both.

Frangipanni was a tall, slightly built, gentleman-looking man, with a very long face, a good, kindly deliberative eye, and a prominent thin nose. He was neatly, though shabbily, dressed; his face was carefully shaved all over, and his hair was cropped close to his head: his manner was grave, polite, and dignified; he was a gentleman at all points. In politics he was not a democrat himself, but he used to tell you very calmly that he would be willing to make an alliance with the very *partie d'enfer* itself, if it could give him a united Italy.

His beloved Boginsky was a patriot of another order: fierce, dark, mysterious plots were the delight of his really kind heart (never, of course, in any way involving assassination, — he was an honest fellow enough). He was a lean, pale young man, of rather large build, without a hair on his deeply-marked face. As far as I can remember, at this

period of time, I should say that he was broad-shouldered and athletic. Other things about him are more easily remembered; for instance, the less, defiant pair of eyes, which, however, set themselves into a scowl at the worst of times: the long, thin, delicate, dexterous fingers, also restless as the eyes. We used to believe the extreme pallor of his complexion arose from imprisonment in a Russian fortress; possibly from an incessant application to the trade by which he got his poor living, that of engraving medals, engraving them, I fear, very badly — had as much to do with it as the imprisonment. I have been told the name Boginsky from the Comtesse de Ségur. I went to him once about a certain matter when he told me his real name, and I found out he was, I doubt whether I was ever more sure before or since. It was a name which ranked Garibaldi's or Kossuth's at that time.

I am remembering too much, possibly. Both gentlemen are now prosperous, and, I think, Italy is united, and Poland dead. That Boginsky in his quiet Australian farm, weeps at times for dead Polonia, one cannot doubt: but she is in memory. No doubt, also, that Frangipanni, putato at Florence, laments his Boginsky; but the world has not behaved very badly to either of all things considered.

I must ask your patience while I introduce Kriegsturm. Kriegsturm was a large, powerful, now a somewhat fat man, though still strong and active. He was a man with a muddy-red complexion, with a fat jowl, which would never be quite clean; a brown, short-cut moustache, a square thick nose, heavy brown eyebrows, and two steady little eyes. A gross, strong man, who ate gluttonously, and ruminated for an hour after meals with his fat knees crossed, and his cunning fish eyes gleaming into quick intelligence whenever there was the least necessity for attention to outward matters.

This man got his living ostensibly by keeping a lodging-house, generally frequented by disreputable patriots; he also did a little photography, and a little of a great many other things which we do not particularize. Among other things, he was a fortune-teller and a subsidizer of spiritual mediums, and, somehow, had made a large and very profitable connection in this line among certain of the nobles. He was a spy and a traitor; but Boginsky and Frangipanni believed in him, loved him, and trusted him. He was a thoroughgoing revolutionist, and far shrewder than such men as our most honest friends before mentioned. And the man had the power, strange to say, of holding these most gentlemen in leash. When Frangipanni came last to him in '48, naked and wounded, Kriegsturm took him in, and set him up again (let that be mentioned to his credit). "I told you not to go," he said. "I told you the pear was not ripe; and I married a Jewess, and ought to know. And here you are. — It will all come in time if you wait for it. A man of your mark should not go to Strasbourg and Boulogne. By the by, his time will come, you mark my words. Let Boginsky go, if you like; if he was knocked on the head, I could find a double like him. And, besides, I am not going to have done yet." The man's shrewdness and power were undeniable, and Boginsky, who limped in later, was obliged to confess that Kriegsturm deserved well of the democracy of Europe. When Garibaldi started for Sicily, in 1860, this man ranged out

sin at this moment if I was not here to take care of you. Sit down in that chair and hold your tongue. You have bitten your mouth in your passion, and the blood is running. Suck your lower lip, and swallow the blood. Don't let him see it; and, if you possibly can, sit quiet, and let me do the talking."

Count Frangipanni had done what he hated doing beyond most men,—had made a fool of himself, and been detected in the act by a very pretty woman. He was standing in the middle of the room, towering up in a dignified attitude, white with rage, the very veins in his forehead swollen, and Count Boginsky was still holding him back with both hands, and begging him to be calm; when there entered to them a very handsome woman in a white bonnet, a rich white lace shawl over a silver-gray moiré antique dress, and delicately fitting cream-colored gloves,—a monstrous contrast to their shabby squalor,—who began, "I beg a thousand pardons," and then stopped in sheer wonder at the astounding appearance of the two men before her.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PRINCESS, AFTER AN INEFFECTUAL EFFORT TO COMPOSE MATTERS BETWEEN ITALY AND AUSTRIA, HAS A LITTLE TABLE-RAPING.

COUNT FRANGIPANNI was the first to recover his presence of mind. He advanced, blushing deeply, towards our old acquaintance the Princess of Castelnuovo. Boginsky stood staring open-mouthed, utterly taken aback at what one may be allowed to call this "sell," and apparently very much inclined to laugh.

Frangipanni took her for a foreigner, probably because she was so well dressed, and spoke to her in his kind of French. "I owe Madame a thousand apologies for discovering me in such a lamentable disorder. My serene Madame will have the complacency to bend her powerful mind to understand that I am getting old, and am subject to *éblouissements*. The sudden announcement of the name of so eminent a princess,"—here he began to remember that she was an Englishwoman—"of one so devoted to the *Tud*—I baffle—to the Austrian interests, produced a recurrence of my malady. I am unfortunately Italian in my sympathies. The noble step-son of Madame, unless I delude myself, ornaments still the court of Vienna. May I do the honors of our miserable *ménage*, and may I receive the commands of Madame?"

Madame, with her silly good-nature, never cared to inquire his name. "You may depend on it," she said in *her* French, which was much queerer than Frangipanni's, "these *éblouissements* are all stomach. Don't let them cause you any inconvenience. A soupçon of brandy in your tea of a morning will set you all right. Every one has them more or less, though you certainly do seem to suffer more than most, I must say. None of you Italian patriots have much digestion to speak of, you know: that is why you are so troublesome. But I am seeking Herr Kriegsthum, and that silly girl told me he was here. I make then my apologies and withdraw."

And she withdrew. Boginsky had time to say, "Is that the Englishwoman whom the traitor Castelnuovo married for her money?" when she came back again, and, standing before the door, opening and shutting her parasol, said, in her native tongue, "Does Monsieur speak English?"

"He does."

"Will you allow me to say, sir, that I hope there is no ill-will between us. I begin to think that I know Monsieur's face, though I cannot remember his name. Will he favor me with it?"

"To oblige Madame, anything. I am the happy Count Aurelio Frangipanni."

"O, my good gracious goodness!" said the Princess, dissolving into tears, and using a pocket-handkerchief most unaffectedly. "This is the most dreadful thing which ever happened to me. My dear sir, I give you my honor that I thought you had been dead some time. And to find alive, and in this miserable state, makes me so unhappy. Can I do nothing?"

"Madame's disappointment at finding me so most natural. Madame's offer of assistance is natural also, as it comes from her kind and generous heart. But she must, with her intuitive taste, perceive that the acceptance of my offers is impossible on my part. I feel sure Madame will see that without taking offence at plain speech."

So spoke the Italian gentleman to the English woman whom he hated and despised, and whose husband had betrayed him most shamefully in ways than one, as he believed by her instigation. There was just a little irony in it, but the Englishman had not brains enough to see it.

"I am so very sorry for all that took place, and politics are politics, and your side was blameless, you know, and I have plenty of money and I am sure that my sainted Massimo, as glory, would approve almost anything you mention in a pecuniary point of view. Do this, if it."

"I will, Madame, and politely decline it."

"I am afraid I have offended you by the offer of money. Forgive me. I am powerful at Vienna, I represent the Protestant interest there to a great extent. Can I do nothing politically for you? you could manage—to manage you know—as to let me take in your submission; I could manage almost anything for you. Now do speak, my dear soul, because I really had nothing to do with it."

So she dragged her coarse-toothed harrow over the nervous and delicate, almost fanatical, poor Count Frangipanni. It seems that the Englishman who came back in the best case from the great nightmare Moscow expedition were the Neapolitan—the most sensitive, most passionate, and yet most enduring of men. Count Frangipanni was one of them.

"Madame's offers are most politely declined," he, very gently indeed.

"Then," she said, "I wish you would tell where Kriegsthum is."

We have most of us known more than one who is under the delusion that if you curse in a foreign language, God does not hear; indeed, it is not an uncommon delusion. Kriegsthum, who had overheard the whole of this from an open door of the parlor, across the passage, had been under this impression, or he never would have dared to swear to himself in the way he did. Polyglot spy as he was, he exhausted nearly his whole strength in the unutterable stupidity of the servant-girl who had brought about this revelation. The Princess's very presence there, inquisitive for him, he argued, would prove that he had at some time been in relation with the traitorous Italian.

party; and, if she accidentally let out anything; their former relations — which, as the most tongued woman he had ever met, she was very to do — Frangipanni and Boginsky would set out among other refugees not so scrupulous as selves, and it would be totally impossible for to leave England without the chance of a knife seen his ribs. "And what the mischief does she here?" he kept asking himself in the intervals, "eary." "Does she want foreign intelligence, nky-panky, or what the deuce does she want?" nky-panky, it appeared. She wanted spiritual ige of the last moment, on a subject which agitated and distressed her extremely. She scarcely taken her seat, and had not been half nute in the room, when she had told him thus. The wonderfully dextrous scoundrel was etly ready for her even in that time, and inter- ed her.

My dear patroness need not delay over prelim- es. I have been, in consequence of the spirit- apport which exists between your highness and lf, in a state of extreme agitation for these two s. You have only to look at me, madam, to hat I speak the truth."

How will that do as to time?" he thought. "I r she has come straight to me; but did she get news at Silcote's or in town? And what the e is it?"

e certainly did look disturbed; even such a ing rogue as he cannot swear himself into a l rage one minute, and remove all traces of e the next. The Princess was very much hted.

I was certain that we were still *en rapport*, my ful Kriegsturm. How can I reward you?"

By sharing your anxiety with me, madam. It rry enough that I, in the interests of the court 'ienna, board at my house two dark assassins. g you to remove this new cause of anxiety as kly as possible."

Then you have no notion of its cause?" asked Princess.

Madam, what time have I had to consult any of usual oracles?" And he reflected, "The first was a good one with regard to time; she has d something in London." Then he went on. It you are fatigued with your long journey, am; long travelling in a railway is most fa- ing, and the Great Western carriages are not ventilated. May I get you a glass of wine?" this because he knew the woman's habit of chat- ing, and because he knew, also, that suggestions ime and place would suggest ordinary ideas to feeble mind, and make her chatter.

I have not come far," she said; "I got my cab he end of Birdcage Walk. So I had not far to k. I am not tired, but I am very much dis- sed."

He had it all now.

I have been distressed myself, madam, for a long e, on the same subject. The original mischief e from Mars crossing Venus at the hour of ivity in the house of death. Your nephew has een to blame; no man could fight against such nences."

"I don't understand astrology," said the poor nces. ("Thank heaven!" thought Kriegsturm, r I am sure I don't. What an awful fool this man is. I wonder what she will stand over this inces?") "I am sure, as you say, that my poor bert, my favorite nephew, has been born under

evil influences, and is not in the least to blame. But I want a spiritual consultation with you, as to whether his father is likely to pay his debts after this dreadful *fiasco*, and if not, what is to be done. This last business is the worst of all, and the Horse Guards have taken it up."

"We had better have a spiritual consultation, madam. I think everything is ready. Shall we begin? We cannot begin too soon," he added, for he wanted time to think, and did not know as much as he wished.

"Will you darken the room?" said the Princess.

Not if he knew it, thought Kriegsturm; he wanted to watch that foolish, handsome face in broad daylight. "The spirits who communicate with me, madam, do not require darkness," he said; and so the rogue and the fool sat down, and put their hands on a table. This seems wearisome and ridiculous; but please to remember that, scarcely four years ago, a large minority of educated people were either playing at, or playing with, the same idiotic game, and that many are playing at it still.

"If you are not going to darken the room," said the Princess, "I think I will take a glass of sherry. I am so awfully afraid of seeing something. I don't mind the knocking so much after a time, but I could n't bear to see anything. I should die of fright."

She had her sherry, and they sat down again. For a very long time there was silence, but at last the Princess gave a scream, for which Kriegsturm, now on the high horse, rebuked her with a scowl. The rapping had begun with what Mr. Dickens calls "a runaway carriage double." Kriegsturm frowned her into silence, and began taking down the numbers of the raps on a piece of paper with a pencil. The raps all came from beneath the table in rapid, unaccountable groups, and by degrees the table became agitated, and they had to stand up; and then the table, being deprived of the assistance of Kriegs- thurm's great, ugly, sausage-like knee, became quiet again. I don't know how he managed the matter, but it was like a fourth-class amateur conjuring- trick from beginning to end, — not to be compared to Frikell or Stodare's worst; but, having to do it before a very silly person, he dared, like those gentlemen, to do it in daylight. The result is what we have to do with, however. When the raps had ceased, the table was quiet, and he had had time to think the matter over, it appeared that the following was the communication from the other world: —

"Captain Bob Silcote have undoubtedly made a worse mess of it than ever he have done before. There is no chance whatever of his father's paying his debts again; and any attempt of his most amia- ble aunt's doing the like thing will bring on her the anger of the spirits, at present well intended to- wards her, and may induce them to plague her, for her good, with a Poltergeist. There is no fear that Captain Silcote will marry the Signora Maritornes, being married already, and knowing well what he is about. He had better go to Vienna ('Cheeze it abroad,' it stood in the original pencil MS., before Kriegsturm had time to bring his mind to bear on details), where his aunt's purse and influence will aid him. Outlawing will be his portion; and let him keep clear of dark places in Italian territory, lest they should find out that he is his dear aunt's nephew."

So much had he time to concoct under the cir-

cumstances. He got rid of his visitor, and went anxiously back to his two lodgers.

They had no earthly suspicion of him: as loyal gentlemen themselves, they never dreamt that a man who had become their familiar friend in misfortune could be a traitor and a spy. Frangipanni talked persistently in a solemn monotone about his wrongs in general, and the injuries received from Castelnuevo, all dinner time; and warned Kriegsturm against having anything to do even with his English wife, who could not but be treacherous from the name she bore.

As for Robert Silcote, his *fiasco* was in the morning papers. In a spirit of sheer mischief he had persuaded that reckless Spaniard, Madame Martornes, to go for a tour, leaving her engagement, at the cost of thousands upon thousands to herself, and the great indignation of the public. It was so openly and notoriously the work of Robert Silcote, and came at the end of so many other shameful scandals, that his collapse was instantaneous. The army authorities interfered, and he was recommended to sell out. Frantic efforts were made by some of the tradesmen to catch him, but he anticipated all the *ne creats*, and arrived safely in Vienna.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOME OF THE SQUIRE'S PLANS FOR ARTHUR.

"AND so that business is over and done with," said the Squire to Arthur one morning before lunch. "And now the best thing you can do is to go over this afternoon and begin to make the agreeable to the eldest Miss Granby. It will be all right; I sounded old Granby on the matter. And at the same time write to those Oxford people, and resign your fellowship, — cut the shop altogether, and pitch your white tie overboard at the same time. It is not too late even now to leave the Church and go to the Bar. Don't let me see those black clothes any more. You must act up to your new position. One parson in a family is well enough, but the head of a family never ought to be in orders."

Silcote said all this in a blundering, hulking sort of way, with his eyes turned from his son, wandering up and down; he jingled his watch-chain also while he was saying it, and was evidently doubtful, if not actually afraid, of the way in which it would be received. He was not at all reassured by Arthur saying, very coolly, —

"I don't half understand you. I think we must have an explanation."

The Squire knew perfectly well how hopeless it was to attempt to bully Arthur. Still, no point would be lost by riding the high horse at first, whereas one or two points might be gained. He was so afraid of Arthur that he had never unrolled his new plans to him, but had trusted that, when they were all in train, and half-accomplished, Arthur would submit to them from necessity. Hence his confused announcement of them, which puzzled Arthur extremely.

"I am going to submit to no explanations or discussions whatever. You are now the heir of the house, and I shall trouble you to behave as the heirs of great families are generally expected to behave; with submission to the head of the house. Yesterday you were nobody, a mere fellow of Balliol or some such place. To-day you are the heir to a very

great property; and, with your talents, you must be in the House of Lords. I have let you have your own way while you were a younger son. I mean that you obey my will now you are the elder."

"You don't mean to say that you have disinherited Tom?"

"Of course I have disinherited that scoundrel. This morning I have made a new will, leaving a whole of the property unreservedly to you. So will have my conditions fulfilled. Nothing can prevent my leaving everything to St. Mary's House if I choose. It does not take long to make a will."

"You have done a very foolish thing, and a very unfair thing," replied Arthur, steadily. "Tom would very well in time, and it was you who spoiled as you are spoiling Anne. As regards myself, I might have had the civility to consult me before burdening me with this wretched property and its responsibilities, and ruining all my plans for the future. I have marked out a plan of life for myself, and the possession of great wealth doesn't come into that plan at all, — in fact, would ruin it. To conceive a man of my talents and ambition, and with my fanatical ideas of the responsibilities of wealth, having to drag out his life among the wretched tails of a large English estate! You must be mad."

"Better men than you have done so, sir."

"H'm," said Arthur. "Well, giving you my point, the more fools they. If you don't do your duty by your estate, you are a rascal; if you do, you cut yourself off from everything which makes life valuable. You, for one instance, make yourself a member of a particular order, and by degrees imbibe the prejudices of that order. I'll defy any man in the world to associate habitually with a set of neighbors, and not take up with their prejudices. And I want no prejudices. There is prejudgishness enough at Oxford for me. A word is a phrase too often repeated gets a fictitious value, and at last is worshipped as a sacred truth; and he who dares handle it in any way roughly is a heretic and a villain: the word Reform, for instance. Not about Miss Granby. I have not the honor of the young lady's acquaintance. May I ask why her name was mentioned just now, as a matter of curiosity?"

"She has eighty thousand pounds, Arthur, and if I could see her my daughter-in-law, I should not have a wish ungratified."

"You want to see her eighty thousand pounds the family?"

"Precisely."

"Then why don't you marry her yourself? You are not old, you are quite as good-looking as ever. I remember you to have been, and she would soon have you than me. There would not be the same disparity in your ages. You know she is old enough to be my mother."

"Then you are determined to thwart me in this!"

"Most assuredly."

"Take care, sir."

"I shall take very good care I don't marry Miss Granby. Come, don't let us quarrel; we quite understand one another. Tom will distinguish himself, and be taken back into favor again. You know he has got a commission in the Austrian army?"

"No. It is impossible. The regulations would not permit of it."

"Nothing is impossible to our aunt, the Princess, at Vienna, it seems. She has managed it. He is fiddling at the top of the tune there."

"With her money, I suppose."

"He will ruin her, as he would have ruined me." "I fear there is very little doubt of it." "Can't you warn her?"

"Yes, I can warn her, and so I can warn her mother, my most gracious father; and so I can warn the thoroughgoing Radicals: but with the result in every case."

"It is a bad business," said the Squire. "You are very foolish, Arthur. And she has got a pretty bit of money of her own. She has a very slippery tongue, but she can't have a bad father. Arthur, I believe she is very fond of me and I have not spoken a civil word to her this twenty years."

"More shame for you," said Arthur. "Why should you be kind to her? It is all nonsense, you know."

"Is it?" said the Squire. "Come, I wish you did drink some more of this wine; it is real Closelyot, of the first *crus*. I imported the hogsheads with Cass of Northcote and Sir Charles Harcourt; you can get no such claret at Oxford."

"I am aware of it; but I take very little wine." "I fear you don't take enough. What makes you so pale? You get paler year by year: sometimes you look quite ghastly."

"Yet I never look ill, do I? I work a great deal — a very great deal, — and very much by tithes. In consequence of something a fellow-tutor told me a few years ago, I determined to work systematically up to the Cambridge standard, and I have done so. I am now examiner, and correcting papers last term has pulled me down. Don't think of my health. I dislike it. I am perfectly well."

"On your honor?"

"On my honor. I have never had a day's illness since I was a boy. The reason I dislike the title of it is that, to me, the loss of health would be such a hideous disaster."

"I wish I could see you well married, Arthur."

"I thought we had done with Miss Granby."

"So we have, if you like. One could as soon mix water with oil as make you marry any woman you did not like; unless you made it out to be your duty, and it doesn't seem to be part of your duty to obey your father. We will say nothing more about her. I should not object to any other, provided she was —; provided she met your views, of course. Is there such a one?"

"Arthur, usually so pale, was, in spite of himself, turning red as he answered, steadily, "No."

"You are perfectly certain that you mean what you say, Arthur, and that there is no young lady to be got?"

"I am perfectly certain," replied Arthur, looking at his father steadily in the face, and getting by degrees less fiery hot about the ears. "There is no one whatever."

"I am delighted to hear it," said the Squire. "It is a great relief to my mind. That sort of thing never does, depend upon it — Well, I'll say no more. Now, can I do anything for you? I must want some money."

"I don't want any money, thank you. But I should be very glad if you would reconsider the matter of turning the widow Granmore and her children out of their farm."

"They shall stop in if you like, at your request." "I only want justice done. I only want to see

that you don't do yourself more injustice with the country. What is your case?"

The Squire stated it eagerly and volubly, — delighted to have a chance of justifying himself before a perfectly unbiased person. "Case, sir? it is all on my side. I allowed her and her three lubberly sons to keep the farm on after Granmore's death, on certain conditions as to crops and fences, not one of which has been fulfilled; they have neither brains, energy, nor capital to fulfil them. She is ruining my land. She is destroying the capital on which she professes to be paying interest. She is living on me. She is breaking every law of political economy; and I have given her notice. I cannot have my land destroyed by other people's widows: but, after all, it is as good as *your* land now, and, if you say let her stay, she shall stay. Only I warn you that, if you are going to manage the estate on these principles, you had better let me marry Miss Granby in real earnest, and accept a rent charge."

"Well," said Arthur, "in strict justice your case is a good one; she has certainly no more right to ruin your land than to pick your pocket. Send the baggage packing. You are only a capitalist, you know, and must, in mere honesty towards the state, behave as any other capitalist. If she is actually over-cropping the land, she ought to go on every ground. I am quite convinced." And so Arthur rose, whistling.

"Is there no middle course?" said the Squire, before he had reached the door.

"Eh?"

"Any middle course. Nothing short of turning her out?"

"O yes, there is a middle course, if you think yourself justified in pursuing it. Renew her lease for a shorter term on more stringent conditions, and lend her some money at four per cent to start with. She knows what she is about fast enough. That is a middle course. I don't recommend it, or otherwise; I only point it out."

"Well, I will follow your advice then, young sir. Is it the new fashion at Oxford to incur obligations and shirk out of the acknowledgment of them, — to persuade a man to do what you wish in such an ill-conditioned manner that the objection actually appears to be on your side? I will do as you wish, Arthur, and most humbly thank you for asking me."

Arthur left the room, and was gone about ten minutes. When he returned he came in very gravely, and laid his hand on the Squire's shoulder.

"Father," he said, "I thank you very heartily for all your kindness to me, more particularly in this matter about the farm. I will, in everything, follow your wishes as far as they do not interfere with my private judgment. I have not behaved well to you to-night, and I ask your forgiveness."

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME OF ARTHUR'S PLANS FOR HIMSELF.

It cost him something to say those last words, even to his own father.

How far can a man, even of the strongest will, succeed in curing the faults of his character? He may repress them and hide them from the eyes of other people almost entirely, but they are there

incubating. And when the moral system gets out of order, the moral gout gets twitching again. A man has generally contracted all the faults of character he will ever be plagued with this side of the grave before he is sixteen; some begin hereditary, some coming through foolish education, and some through evil opportunity. The life of the most perfect saint would be the life of a man who by misfortune had found himself at years of discretion the heir to a noble crop of evil moral instincts, including of course the accursed root of the whole evil tree, selfishness; and yet who had succeeded, through all states of ill health, poverty, and the temptation of prosperity, in keeping them in repression; in never even betraying to the world the fact of the temptation; the fact of the evil disposition existing at all: knowing himself to be often in wish a sinner, yet acting, throughout his life, in every relation like a saint. Such a character is possible, and yet even of such a character one could not say that he had *cured* his worse instincts; one could only say that he had most nobly suppressed them.

There are those who hold the very noble and glorious belief that, through the grace of God, and the persistent imitation of Christ, evil instincts themselves become eradicated, and at the last that the soul itself quits the body in perfect accord with her Saviour. Of such a divine creed let us speak with reverence, and deep admiration. We have not to do with such great and deep matters here. We are speaking of the world, worldly.

We are speaking of Arthur Silcote: a man who took pride in dexterously, and with shrewd common sense, steering clear of the Pantheists of those times on the one hand and the Tractarians on the other: destructively snapping, bitterly enough at times, at the weak points of each; and constructively building up a most queer and adaptive form of Orthodoxy, which the more advanced and embittered spirits on either side agreed (in that if in nothing else) would certainly get him a bishopric in the end.

He was no saint, although a man of perfect purity in morals, and one who made duty and self-sacrifice (as he thought) the first objects of his life. If you told him that ambition and love of power were the mainspring of most of his actions, he would honestly admit it, and say coolly in addition that he felt himself fit for power, and that it was therefore his duty to acquire it. Continual and uninterrupted success from his very youth had developed in him that form of selfishness which we call self-confidence. He had, with his self-confidence, taken stock of this same vice among other, real and imaginary, imperfections, to be cured in his scheme of making himself a perfect and successful character; and, as Mr. Pip when he wrote out a schedule of his debts and left a margin, thought it was as good as paying them, so Arthur, when he wrote down "overweening self-confidence" in the analysis of his character, alongside of gluttony and laziness, thought that the former devil, being *en visage*, was of necessity laid with the two others. Nevertheless, Arthur had been a prig at school sometimes, and, in spite of all his spasmodic efforts to the contrary, was a little of a prig now. He was a man whose goodness shamed one, but he was without the quality of *bonhomie* now, as he was five years before, when the old tutor at Balliol warned him of this fault in his character, and when he so faithfully determined to amend it.

His influence among undergraduates was less than nothing. The year of his proctorship he

was nearly howled out of the theatre; although one was able to bring a single case of *invidia* against him. Perfectly without blame himself, was utterly unable to make allowances for his scarcely younger than himself. He had been warned about the reckless stinging use of his tongue by wise and good friends, and he thought he had conquered that habit at least: but with over the old habit came back, and his sentences against undergraduates were embittered sometimes by words, so that men said they would sooner be executed by the other proctor than galed by him. A manner as an examiner, too, was cold, contemptuous and inexorable; the "shady" man, whose credit left him to Silcote of Balliol, felt himself half placed before he began. And yet there were about a dozen men, all of the first mark in the University who believed in him, as Jourdan believed in a young artillery officer Bonaparte, and who said that he was not only the cleverest, but the best and kindest fellow alive.

His ideas about women, about their powers of intellect, their great weight in the social scale, whether just or unjust, — their natural capacity of learning logical reasoning, — whether their mental conclusions came from an interior source or from the want of a university education, — were not of much value, seeing that he knew next to nothing whatever about them. But he would reel it off, by the yard about women, with his hands in his pockets comfortably, and would leave you with the impression that they were to be tolerated, but that he did not think much of them. Miss Austen? Certainly, but then any one could write a novel. Her novels far better than Smollett's or Fielding's! Certainly, they were more entertaining, and was without the element of coarseness. Mrs. Somerville and Miss Herschell? They had shown a certain capacity for figures. Mrs. Hemans? Few ideas of rhythm and pathos. Miss Barrett? Well he would give you Miss Barrett, if you came to him provided you admitted her to be an exception — otherwise would argue on until it was time to hasten out of college. Madame Dudevant, then? None no account. She only reproduced that rebellion against formulas which expressed itself in the last thought of the Reformation and the French Revolution. Mere overstated cases against old formulas did not constitute original thought. She was Hans youngest sister's ghost, without his powers of epigram or rhythm. Miss Brontë? A good and nervous though coarse, describer of a narrow landscape. And so on: on this, as on every other subject, up to be bitter when he knew his subject, and trying to be smart when he did not.

One Christmas-day, as the reader may remember, a most absurd accident threw him very awkwardly against his brother's governess, Miss Lee. He had entertained a considerable objection to that young lady, and his more intimate introduction to her had been exceedingly unfortunate; but fate would have it that he should try to remove that awkwardness by sitting beside her and talking to her. Perfect physical beauty and grace, combined with propriety and opportunity, will have their due effect as long as there are finely organized men and women in the world; and so Arthur, by the end of that somewhat memorable evening, discovered that Miss Lee was not understood where she was, and that her studies required directing, and her mind forming: in short, he determined to devote a little of his spare time to taking Miss Lee in hand, and seeing

er or no it was too late to make anything of

parently there were considerable hopes that Lee would not become an utter castaway. He had great expectations of doing something with her, though it was rather late in the day; hope of providing her with fixed opinions on to shape her character, and of giving her an life. He took to his task with a will, and Lee's profound submissive reverence evidently him satisfaction, for he persevered in a way drew the warmest praise from his brother. was ignorant of poetry (she suppressed the fact tolerably extensive acquaintance with Byron); must be introduced to the exquisite tenderness of Tennyson, and have the deeper passages united to her, — sometimes, Madam Dora declares, square by moonlight. She was ignorant of poetry; he was kind enough to read to her aloud account of a Highland fight, in which thirty were killed with the usual brutality, in the rosy prose of the late Lord Macaulay. Further, Lee's touch on the piano was most unsatisfactory, it wanted firmness for sacred music; and notwithstanding Arthur's continued attention cured her of odious habit of keeping her wrists higher than keys. In short, it was the old story, — Monneur amused himself. He was short and sharp at times, and at times angry, for the poor, though not naturally dull, was dull by habit; used as she was to reckless freedom, at times drilling and his exigence were almost unbearable.

At first she submitted to him, and used her every art to please, from mingled motives of respect, of love, and of the wish to attract him. He was in her eyes a very great man indeed, a king among men, a man respected, consulted, and looked up to by all the other men she knew of, the savage old hunter included; a man whose prestige was paramount in their little world, and whom she, and indeed others, believed to have the same weight and consideration in the world as he had in his own family: there are such men in most families which are removed from the real world. So she had begun by trying to please him, and gain his esteem and his admiration too, perhaps, for she had a look-glass; and went on to find that he was wondrous handsome, and that his speech was so pregnantly suggestive of all kinds of unknown knowledge, and sources of intellectual pleasure of which she had never dreamt, that she had forgot about her beauty, and wondered how he could ever have taken the trouble to notice one so far inferior to him in every way as herself. If after that *fiasco* of his on the Christmas evening, she had thought of attracting him by her face, that idea soon passed away. She forgot herself by comparison of herself with him; in short, to use the old formula, the poor girl fell desperately in love with him. In an innocent, silly way he had thought she would have liked a lover to fetch and carry for her. She had got one with a vengeance; but there was no fetch and carry about this one.

And Mr. Arthur all this time? Why Mr. Arthur could look his father straight in the face and say there was no woman in the case at all, and mean it too. But his temper began to suffer in these times. In Convocation and in Common Room he was getting an ugly name in that way, and his best friends were lamenting it. His enemies, who were many, allowed him any amount of ability, but

said that his temper had always been bad, and was getting worse, and that his temper would shelve him effectually. His friends said that there was not a better-hearted fellow in Christendom, but that he was trying too much, and that his nerves were getting shaky. Neither party knew that his fresh irritability arose from the fact that he was thinking too much of his brother's governess, and steadily trying to deny the fact to himself, — that towards the end of each term he had nearly succeeded in forgetting, or believing that he had forgotten, the existence of such a person; but that at the beginning of each vacation his wilful legs carried him to his brother's school-room, where he saw her again; and found her improved in intelligence and beauty each time; proving by her improvement that she had perpendicled every hint and suggestion of his, and acted on them with diligent reverence, and an intelligence which seemed to "square" itself (mathematically speaking) month after month, and promised in time to become very great. He began to see that in this sometime dowdy careless girl there existed a very noble nature, and not a little intellect; and that he had awakened them. He wished he had never seen her, a hundred times a week. If he ever, in his inexorable plans, "contracted an alliance" (he had no idea of your Darby-and-Joan marriages) he must have, first of all, "connection." Such a preposterous action as that of marrying Miss Lee meant ruin, retirement to a college living, and a wasted life. It was not to be thought of for an instant. And, besides, the girl's manners! He could train her in other ways; but what man could speak to a woman on the subject of manners? It was a worse matter than the "connection" business. Yahoo brothers-in-law were bad enough, but they might be pensioned. A wife whose family was without interest was bad enough too; but a wife who was so utterly without knowledge of some of the ways of the world as Miss Lee, was quite out of the question.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOME OF MR. BETTS'S PLANS FOR HIMSELF AND OTHERS.

ONE of the circumstances which it now becomes necessary to notice more prominently is the extraordinary friendship which had sprung up between Squire Silcote and Mr. Betts.

It had begun in the battle-royal with the Sir Hugh Brockliss faction, about the removal of St. Mary's Hospital into the country. Mr. Betts's shrewdness, his bold bull-dog style of fighting, the rough carelessness of speech natural enough in a somewhat coarse man finding himself among superiors, who were perfectly aware of his antecedents, and very much inclined to snub him; more than all, perhaps, his intense dislike and contempt for Sir Hugh Brockliss, — natural enough, also, for men of his class are very apt to hate the class next above them: all these things, combined with the profoundest respect for the Squire himself, had won Silcote's heart, and he had admitted Betts to his intimacy in a wonderful manner. As time went on he found that Mr. Betts suited him, and became necessary to him; and Arthur, coming suddenly from Oxford once, was very much astonished to find Mr. Betts quietly ensconced opposite his father before the fire, with dessert and wine between them, as comfortable as could be.

"This is queer," he thought, "but it may lead to good. Algy's head trumpeter as the governor's chief confidant. If the fellow will not trumpet too loud, this may lead to a great deal of good. I wonder if he has tact enough to see that."

He had quite as much tact as Arthur in his way. He once, in a natural manner, when the conversation led easily up to the point, mentioned Algy's noble behavior to him in a manly, straightforward way, and left the heaven to work.

"It'll end in a legacy, mayhap; but, as for that, the Squire's is a better life than Algernon's. I'll do all I can; but time is the word, and caution. That old Princess! I wish she was choked with her diamonds, or smothered in one of her satin gowns, or hung in her own Vallanceens. I'd give a ten pun' note, my lad, to know what games you have been up to in foreign parts in your time, and why you are everlastingly bobbing up and down to Kriegsthum's in a black veil. There's a nail loose in one of your shoes, madam, or you would n't be hand and glove with the most pig-eyed, false-hearted, ten-linguaged" (Mr. Betts distrusted, with a true British distrust, those who spoke foreign tongues) "rascal in Europe. I could buy your secret of him, my lady, if I was rich enough; but where would be the use of sporting my shillings against your pounds? Old Frankypanny knows all about you, too, but he is such a stuck-up, honorable, poverty-struck old swell that I as much dare ask the Duke of Norfolk. There's old Miss Raylock, too; I was present when she was in the library, rummaging among the old books according to custom; and she was talking as pleasant to me as need be, and as confidential; but when you came in, rustling with your silks, she shut up, did the old girl, all in a minute, as tight as a Chubb's safe, and begins a bowing and scraping, and sticking her old nose in the air; ay, and looked the princess all over, as well as you, and better too. *She* knows. But she is no good. One of the same sort as Frankypanny. That Boginsky, he is a regular young sieve; he'd be the fellow to work, but I never did trepan a loose-mouthed man, except in the way of business, and I never will. Nevertheless, my fine madam, I am deeply indebted to you for your well-meant effort to hoist me out of this; and, if I can put a spoke in your wheel, you may rely on my doing so with a thorough good will."

For the Princess strongly objected to the introduction of Mr. Betts at Silcotes. Among her better reasons for this, one can see that she distrusted him because he belonged strongly to the faction of the dispossessed prince Algernon; and it was possible, with such a whimsical man as her brother, that his old dislike of Algernon might die out under new influence, to the terrible detriment of her darling Tom, now become a pest and an expensive nuisance to his father. Arthur, in case of being heir, would deal nobly by his brother; from the wronged Algernon Tom could not hope much, she argued, not knowing that the Quixotic Algernon, in his blind devotion to Tom, would have most likely given him back nearly everything, or, at least, would have trusted him with far more than would the shrewder Arthur. Among the most ignoble motives for her dislike of Mr. Betts was the fact that Mr. Betts, having done a vast deal of foreign business in his life among shaky Continental bonds, was intimate with a great many very shaky Continental characters, and chiefly with Kriegsthum, whose close acquaintance with the chances of foreign revolutions had made him a most useful man

in old times, and whose information he had paid handsomely.

She knew that Betts and Kriegsthum were intimate, and, with her usual foolishness, asked brother if he was aware of the sort of character was bringing into his house; giving an account of Betts's bankruptcy, with a great many fresh particulars invented, I fear, on the spot. Silcote told her that he was quite aware of Mr. Betts's bankruptcy, but that he liked the man. He said very quietly, that she saw at once that she was only, by being too quick and eager, aroused old obstinacy in him, and gave up her point rectly: becoming at once intensely civil and polite to Mr. Betts.

A woman who shifted her tactics in the most transparent manner on the smallest occasion. A man who in details never knew her mind for days together, and yet who, with regard to the great objects, which her weak brain was capable of understanding, could show a persistency to the stupid, narrow obstinacy of her brother was nothing! Some person remarking once to Miss Raylock that they wondered how such a very decided person as the Squire could have such a weak and silly sister, that shrewd old lady remarked, "You little know her. She is a thousand times more Silcote than Silcote himself. She is the greatest living impersonation of Silcotism, which has found its latest development in that, to me, dear old young gentleman Arthur. You may prevent her from having her own way, but it will take more than three of the best of you to do it. And she is not a bad woman at bottom."

From this time one of the leading purposes of the Princess's life was the elimination of Betts. She did not exactly know why, or even settle with herself whether or no it was better to make a friend of him. She knew what she wanted done, and Betts was in the way of doing it. Betts was a clever person than herself, and she was afraid of negotiation on that ground. He must be removed. She had only her old set of weapons to fight with, — representation, patience, and affectionate politeness towards the victim. Betts knew her object, understood her artifices, and she was perfectly aware that he did so; but she knew, better than the twenty Bettesses, the power of everlasting affectionate civility: it lulls the most hard, bitter man to sleep some time or another, particularly when administered by a princess. The victim is sure to become confidential sooner or later, and commit himself. Her instincts in this respect were better than Betts's shrewdness; but, unfortunately for her, Betts had nothing in reserve about his previous life with the exception of his bankruptcy, of which all the world knew. She, on the other hand, felt perfectly certain that a man who was on the best terms with her beloved Kriegsthum must have some fact in his biography in reserve; which fact could be bought from Kriegsthum for a consideration and made useful. And Kriegsthum was a great silent or a fellow, who was not to be suddenly or spasmodically moved without a large outlay; and Tom was very expensive to her now that his father had pitched him overboard; and so all outward and vigorous action against Betts was given up for a while.

In a short time Betts saw this; he kept his eye on her very closely until he saw that she was passive, and then knowing all the time that she was the key to all the cross purposes in the house, he began his work. He neither saw end or object at

only saw that the Dark Squire (whom he be not such a bad fellow after all) had been and he guessed that the Princess was at the of it all. The first thing to do was evident—in an influence over the Squire, and that very difficult.

the whole Silcote family are plagued with to be a kind of moral ossification of the

Some time in his earthly career each member of his family seems to get an idea into his head, never can be got out again without severe affliction, and the patient efforts of all the loving friends of the family. And a notice line is, that obstinate families of this kind have so many friends.

most foolish obstinacy among us does beget respect. Silcote himself, in spite of his brutal ways, was most highly respected and feared in the county. Arthur was respected at Oxford. When he began to develop the family was respected even by the Protestant party parish: even Miss Raylock respected the Squire, though she declined to acknowledge it. To have to do with Silcote himself now. His peculiar form of the family failing had led to his driving himself out of all society, until he began, as a wild man, to see that he was falling behind with the world. To him appeared Betts, keen, strong, and wise in the ways of the world from the Squire had dissociated himself so long. Any wonder that Betts's influence over him soon became almost equal to that of Arthur? "I want to see the right done here," Betts said to himself; "but it is all so wrong, that I don't see my way to the right. The Squire is not wise, but he is a family failing. However, here is twelve thousand a year to be manoeuvred, right or wrong way, and it is a precious sight better working other folks' money than your own. Here you are, my good friend Squire Silcotes, get over the lawn to consult me about buying Welsh bullocks, knowing perfectly well that I know no more about bullocks than I do about decorations. If I was a fool I should pretend to know something about them, but as I ain't, I shall chaff you about coming to a stocker for agricultural information. All you Silcotes want a dry nurse to take care of you; only don't be particular about having her shins cut, or her nose bit off."

Mr. Betts," said the Squire, "would you mind going down to the green, and looking at some of the bullocks for me?"

"I've no objection to look at your bullocks, Squire, bargaining that you should tell me which is the best and which is the tail."

"I wanted your advice with regard to buying

When was the bailiff took ill, then?"

"He is not ill."

Then why don't you ask him about the bullocks? You know a deal better about them than a stocker. You ask too much advice, Squire; and, if it is more, take too little."

CHAPTER XX.

JAMES HAS A WET WALK.

"STAND THERE," said Dora, "and I will show you it all was. You are not quite in the right place

You must stand close to the fire with your

hands spread out, blinking your eyes. There, that is just exactly the way you stood on the very first night in that very same place, with all the dogs round you, and your face all bleeding and bruised, and your dirty little cap in your hand, and your dirty little smock-frock all over mud; and you looked such a poor little mite of a thing that I cried about you when I went up stairs, and was peevish with Anne because she wanted to go on with the silly play about the Esquimaux."

James Sugden stood for a few minutes looking into the fire, without answering. He had grown to be a very handsome upstanding young fellow indeed; with more than the usual share of physical beauty, and a remarkably clear, resolute pair of eyes. There was also a dexterous, rapid grace about all his movements, not generally observable in sixth-form hobbedehoy youths. He still wore the uniform of St. Mary's, and was in age about seventeen.

For the first time he had been invited by the Squire to spend his midsummer vacation at Silcotes, and join Algernon's children in their yearly holidays at their grandfather's grand house. He had hitherto spent all his vacations since the removal of the school in Lancaster Square; and the summer vacation had been very dull to him; for Dora and Reginald, with the younger ones, had always been at Silcotes. He had been condemned to drag on the burning long summer days alone with Algernon and Miss Lee, and had always longed intensely for the time to come to return to school. This year, however, Mr. Betts had written to him to say that he was to render himself at Silcotes by five o'clock on the twentieth of June without fail. So, committing his box to an intricate system of cross country carriers,—each of whom was supposed to meet the other without fail at obscure villages, and remember a vast number of obscure directions,—he had said good by to his old friend, Ben Berry, the porter, and, taking only an ordnance map and his sketch-book, had started from St. Mary's by the Lake early in the summer's morning, with his face set straight towards Silcotes. "Only two half-counties to walk through, before the afternoon, my Ben," he said on starting. "Not much that, hey! Not so bad as the journey down here."

A resolute young fellow enough. A Silcote could not have been more resolute. The glory of the day waned as he walked stoutly on, until he saw his familiar old Boisey in the hazy dim distance at noon. The distance was very hazy, and the air was very close and hot, yet he held on through a country utterly strange to him, choosing always, by that geographical genius which one sees in some men, but not in very many, the roads which would suit his purpose, and end somewhere; in preference to those, apparently as much traffic-worn as the others, which only delude one by leading to the parsonage-house and the church. The course was northeast, and the great Alps of thunder-cloud, creeping up through the brown haze, had met him and were overhead, when having crossed the infant Loddon at Wildmoor, and having delayed to pick, for Dora, a nosegay of the beautiful gemus and orchises, which to him, coming from the heath-country, seemed so rare and so rich, he turned into the deep clay lanes towards the heath.

By this time every one was getting to shelter, and the thunder was loud. The landlord of a little roadside inn he passed urged him to stay, and not go aloft on the desolate open heath, where a man had been killed by the lightning not long before. But

weather mattered little to the shepherd lad, and he pleasantly declined, saying that "he had not time." The landlord looked curiously and admiringly after the swift-footed pleasant-looking young gentleman as he sprang up the steep ascent towards the thunder; but James never paused, although the storm came down fiercely now, and Boisey was hidden from him completely. In Bramshill Park, the lightning was leaping and blazing all around him, lighting up the dense cloud of rain in every direction, and once, with a snap and a roar, it shone in blue and white reflections from every window in the whole of the vast façade of the house, showing him that he was close to shelter. But the humor was on him now; he would walk on, though not altogether recklessly; the storm had settled down on the park, and was tearing and riving at that most beautiful spot, till it had exhausted its fury; even in his headlong humor he knew this, and kept away, as far as possible, from the trees. Before he had been long in the park he had received his caution on this head; a great oak loomed on him out of the rain, and he suddenly saw a bright spark in one of the forks of it; and before he could put his arm over his head, eight centuries' growth of timber was scattered around him among the fern and the heather. Yet, though he saw the figures of men about the stables beckoning him to stay for shelter, he held on. He had set it in his mind to be at Silcotes by five o'clock, and he held to his resolution with steady good-humored tenacity.

The next village and street was a stream of water as he passed through it; no soul was out of doors; and, as they saw him pass, they wondered whether he was penniless or desperate to walk in such weather. Had some of them known that he was bound for Silcotes, they would not have wondered at all: it would have been merely Hamlet going to England. By the time he had passed Bear Wood, he had succeeded in walking down the storm, and Boisey was close before him in the sunlight of a very practical and quiet summer's afternoon. The reckless fit passed when he found himself in decent and ordinary weather, and he began to bethink himself how he should look at his journey's end, and what the Squire would say of him in his present very untidy condition.

The uniform of St. Mary's, carefully developed by the theoretically-minded Arthur, and the really practically-minded Mr. Betts, was as well calculated to recover from the effects of weather as that of a French soldier. Yet, in his intense eagerness to see some bit of the old country again, to be again within the range of his earlier experiences, he begrudged even the time it took to dry his clothes, which he did at a riverside inn. He now got into the old country at last, and changed his pace suddenly; for, anxious as he was to get to the Silcotes' country, he was anything but anxious to meet the Squire.

He had come so fast, that even the drying of his clothes and the dawdling along by the old familiar paths did not make him late. Every hedgerow was familiar to him, and such an incident as the mending of a stile, or the filling up of some time-honored gap, was of strange importance, and tempted him to delay; but, nevertheless, as the turret clock struck five, he peered through the open door into the dark and empty hall.

Empty but for one figure. Silcote himself was seated before a wood fire in the great cavernous fireplace, and which was never without fire, summer or winter. Hearing a footstep on the threshold, the

Squire rose, turned, and looked steadily at him one moment.

He was not changed. He was the same strong figure, and the same rizzled hair, so far to James from his childhood. It was the same "Dark" Squire who advanced towards the man as he stood, hesitating and modest in porch; but there was a look about that Squire whom James had never seen before in his casual variations of his face. Something had gone wrong with the Squire this morning. Things generally did go wrong with him, but the day was generally was mere intolerance and ill-temper; on this occasion the Squire came forward with him bowed down, and an expression of grief and pain on his face. James thought he was coming to meet him; but, to his great astonishment, the Squire passed him steadily, waving him on with his hand, and then stood in the porch with him, but looking away from him, and said—

"It is of no use. I will not recall what I have done. You have had chance after chance, and have turned persistently to evil. Even if I please to deal with me as heavily as Heaven pleases, it will not benefit you. When all is done, I shall fall back on another beside you. You have been here; this is one of the innumerable theatres of lies of my sister. You have had my answer, and, even in this deep affliction, I have all my obstinacy about me. The house is at your disposal, but I am not accessible. The Princess and I have arranged this between you. Pray carry out the arrangements in my house to the utmost. I leave my hands of the whole matter. I only caution you of the extreme danger of your presence here, and assure you that I will do nothing whatever to stop the course of justice."

It was evident to James that the Squire had driven himself mad at last, as his mother always said he would. Thinking it best on the whole, however, to justify himself, even to a madman, he turned to Silcote, as he was passing on, and said, hastily enough,—

"I beg your pardon, sir, but it was by your orders that I came here."

Silcote turned and looked on him again. As he was confused for a moment, but recovered himself very quickly. "My boy," he said, "you must be young Sugden. To be sure. You were to be here by five, and are punctual. That is good. I have had afflictions, my boy," he continued, drawing near to him, attracted by his bright, honest look, and evidently glad to explain himself to any one. "I have had great afflictions through all my life, and the heaviest has come this morning. They come me at times, these afflictions of mine, and I ask you for some one else. Be a good son to your mother, boy, for she is a good woman. God is hard on bad sons and bad fathers; The Syrians were right there. As for you, I hear nothing but good of you; all kinds of good from every one. You will die young, but that is no matter; the good ones always die young,—Cleobis, you know. Make yourself happy here; hear but a word in private. Hold your tongue about what you heard me say just now. Let it be a secret between us, boy. You are in there; go in and find her. Don't fall in love with Anne, mind; she is too much of a Silcote. Choose Dora. Go in and keep our secret. Not a word to any soul, or it will come round to Arthur at last; he gets hold of all our secrets in time."

James felt a little more dazed than he was in the

the thunder-storm in Bramshill Park. a curious reception after a curious head-achey. The first average and commonplace which befell him during that somewhat rainy day was his meeting with Dora in the hall. commonplace enough, as she always was, but once made him stand before the smouldering, and spoke to him the words which stand beginning of this very chapter.

CHAPTER XXI.

"I," said Dora, "consider that you have lived since that time, immensely, both physically and morally. Other people, as for instance me, may hold the opinion that you are in danger of becoming a very shallow young spark. Miss Mowbray's opinions, more particularly when directed towards me by my uncle Arthur, I am bound to take, may be of opinion that we are both getting old to continue our former intimacy. I am not, however, to combat other people's opinions, so as to express my own. And to tell you the plain truth, James Sugden, I have loved you pretty closely for some years, and I will do."

"And you will do in time," said James: "that you will think before you speak, and when you make a mistake, think again and mend it. If you don't do now, you know. There, that is not enough to suit the Princess. Now, let us be comfortable. How are you, and what's the news?"

"I am very well, and I may have some news or I may not." "I have had an astonishment, to-day," said James. "I have I." "Are you going to trump my trick as usual?" said James.

"Did Dora, 'I can't tell till you have played your card.'"

"Did then James remembered that he was bound by the rules of honor not to say a word of what passed between him and the Squire, and so he remembered that he could not play his trump."

"Then any small card will do for the trick," said James. "I have been utterly astonished at the size of the coloring of my grandfather's quilled German card. Now."

"There is something more than that, Dora, I think."

"I suppose you do, unless you are a goose; but we are to play the great game of astonishment, shall not hold all the trumps in your own hand." "I can't play my trump, Dora. I can't tell you. I have heard in the last twenty minutes. Answer me this. Is there anything wrong in the game?"

"You give up the game?" "Entirely."

"Well, then, I will tell you; and I am very glad we are alone together. I fear there is something wrong indeed. There has been a long interval between Arthur and his father in the library. My uncle Arthur came out first, looking as pale as a sheet, a deal more like death than life, James, I saw you; and after a time, grandpapa came out next, — ay, he did, and sat there before the fire with his head in his hands for I don't know how long."

"Why, I saw him sitting so myself," said James. "Did you?" said Dora. "Well, that is an important and valuable fact, supposing any one had the audacity to question my statement. At present we can keep it in reserve. The question is, what is the matter?"

"I wonder what it is," said James.

"I suppose you do, unless you have determined to give up wondering for the rest of your life. I wonder. Any body can wonder."

"After all, you know," replied James, "you haven't any right to wonder, because it is no possible business of yours. And you have no right to catch me up so short. I dare say you think that sort of thing very fine, but I don't. I don't approve of it. You are fond of doing it to me when we are alone, but you know you never dare to do it before company, for fear of my picking you up. I thought you were going to be comfortable. If this is what you mean, you had better be uncomfortable."

"I am uncomfortable," said poor Dora, stamping her foot, and beginning to cry. "I meant to be so nice to you, and I am so very fond of you —"

As this is an eminently unsentimental story, I will omit what passed before James and Dora were standing looking out of the window together, perfectly "comfortable." "Paul and Virginia" is not out of print surely, though I have not seen it lately.

But though Dora was "comfortable" enough with James, she was far from being good company; at least to any one but him. Everything was going wrong, it appeared, at Lancaster Square (she said that things in general were all mops and brooms, an expression which we are forced to trace to Miss Lee, in her earlier form of development): grandpa Betts was always here now (meaning at Silcotes); and poor pa had not a sound head left in the house to guide him except hers. There was only one pupil left now, young Dempster, who had only stayed on to propose to her, and had got his answer. There were no new pupils coming. The weekly bills were all in arrear, and likely to be, for her father had declared for ritualism, and the pews would all of them be empty in three months. It was a sudden resolution. He had been brooding over the matter for a long time; but after his recent visit to Oxford, he had decided, and declared that nothing would move him now. If grandpa Betts had been by his side, he could have made the thing more palatable to the parishioners; he always warned pa to let them down to it very easy; but then he was here, concocting business of some sort with grandpa Silcote, and so what was the use of talking? Algernon's health was worse than ever, and he had to swallow a king's ransom in cardamums and gentian, and, though the doctor might wait for his money, the grocer certainly would not. Then she passed to Miss Lee. Passed to Miss Lee, and stopped. "I cannot speak of her. If I dared tell her that she was neglecting the duties nearest to her, she would only say that she is fulfilling higher ones. I wish she could find time for both. But she can't, and she is a good woman. Believe in Miss Lee, will you, James?"

"The last saint in the calendar: certainly," said the public schoolboy. "About the Princess, for instance. From a great variety of hints I have received, — or, to be perfectly truthful, from a vast number of conversations I have heard, as an unappreciated and unnoticed fourth party in your father's house, between your father, Arthur, and the banished prince Thomas, — I have formed the conclusion that she is at the bottom of every piece of

mischievous which happens in this house. How does she stand affected in the present instance? Here we have all things going wrong, both at my old home in Lancaster Square, and at this new home here at Silcotes. A woman is at the bottom of it, you know. Tell me about *her* movements, and I will form my judgment."

"Vanity Fair, Vanity Fair," replied Dora at once: "you are talking Vanity Fair, my lord. The book that makes every schoolboy who has read it believe that he is a man of the world. Bless you, I read that book, and thought it was the key to the world. But Miss Lee and Aunt Mary have cured me of that. Don't talk Vanity Fair. Be a boy."

"And don't you give me your father's remarks on that book at second-hand. Come now."

"I think we had better have no more of this crude babble," said Dora.

"And there spoke your uncle Arthur," said James.

"Well, here come Reginald and Anne," said Dora. "My dear James, we shall never do Beatrix and Benedict. We have not the art. Let us be friends."

There entered now a pale, delicate, but very amiable-looking boy, a boy say seventeen, and with him a very beautiful girl, of nearly the same age. The pair were utterly indescribable, simply because there was nothing to describe as yet.

They were merely a well-looking enough boy and girl, but in no degree remarkable as yet in outward appearance. To the shrewd, and younger, or rather more slowly-developed pair who watched their entrance, there was something observable: they had been quarrelling, and were not on speaking terms with one another. James and Dora "spurred" continually, but never quarrelled. Reginald and Anne, who always paired off together, seldom or never "spurred," but spent their time between strongly ostentatious bursts of affection and long periods of sulks. They were sulking at one another now, in a more than ordinary way; and Dora was so fully aware of this fact, and followed her kindly instinct so far, as to go across to James, lightly pass her hand over his hair, and lay her hand on his shoulder. James, in the most accidental manner, managed to turn his head and touch that hand unseen, and so was enlisted on the side of the peacemaker.

"I have come through such an awful storm," he said, as soon as the usual greetings were given and exchanged, though without moving for fear of Dora's hand going from his shoulder. "Thunder, and lightning, and rain, beyond belief. But I had some one to see at the journey's end, and I never flinched, Dora."

"You were afraid of grandpa's being angry if you were after your time, and you were more afraid of him than of the thunder."

"Well, there is something in that," said James, throwing back his head, and looking up in her face laughing, "though it may not have been pretty to say so. I knew there was a Silcote, male or female, young or old, at the end of the journey; and that I was pretty sure to get my nose snapped off somehow. Reggy, old man, it was lucky for you that you came on two days before me, you would have got drenched. There has been no storm here."

There seems to be an Avenger who waits on the heels of good-natured people who try to solve (in a chemical sense), or water away, a quarrel by com-

monplace. When I say an Avenger, I don't in the least mean your Nemesis. Your Nemesis acts settled law, principle, and logic, through long periods of time; sometimes so long, that a matter exactly eight centuries will go by without a sign of her. She belongs to the atmosphere of tragedy with which we have nothing to do. The ordinary Social Avenger holds the same relation to her. Mrs. Sherwood's Inbred Sin (the only agreed character in the "Infant Pilgrims") holds it to Milton's Satan. Your Nemesis is deliberative and inexorably just; your Avenger is sudden and eternally unjust; acting, for instance, in this case only on the very vague basis that you have no business to talk commonplace on any grounds whatever. The Avenger came swiftly down on James and gave it to him. The thunder-storm was at that very point on which Reginald and Anne had been quarrelling.

"I am glad to find myself confirmed," said Anne from the window in which she was sulking. "There has been no thunder-storm here; and there will be none. And he has hurried me home here, where we were comfortably by the river, watching the fish, because he said there would be thunder-storms. He would not have his health if he did not have his own way."

A tremendous crash of thunder among the woods close by only made matters worse. Reginald was right, which was profoundly exasperating; and what was more, took every opportunity of reminding her of it, in the pause between each blaze of lightning and each rattle of thunder, till his voice sounded like a response in some terrible litany. The quarrel was not mended that night.

But the hours, and the bells which announced the hours, were as inexorable at Silcotes as at a Trappist monastery. In spite of a wild intrusion of weather outside, the dressing-bell rang its defiance to the thunder, and they went to dress. Then the dinner-bell rang, and they came one by one into the blue drawing-room, bluer than ever with continual flashes of lightning; and were marshalled solemnly by the butler into the long oak dining-room; where these four young people were set solemnly down to their soup, in a thunder-storm, with butler in black, and four footmen in crimson breeches, to wait on them.

Ridiculous enough! The youngest footman was the most intimate and bosom friend of James in the old days, and James was dying to compare notes with him; but there was an awful gulf between them now. They had been schoolmates, and had been shepherd-boys for neighboring farmers, and many times had surreptitiously driven their sheep close together at the risk of their mixing, at the risk of a terrible beating, that they might win away together some few of the hours of a winter day by the interchange of such human thoughts as were working in their dull little brains. But the young footman took no notice of the hands of the young scholar, beyond insisting, in spite of a snarling net butler, on waiting on him, and on him solely, and plying him with every kind of sauce, the way not as yet being within his jurisdiction.

In the midst of this very awful dinner, the footman, now seen for the first time, swept in solemnly and took her place at the head of the table. It pleased her, for purposes of her own, to dress herself like Mary Queen of Scots, and she sat at the head and presided at the table, with her jewels and her lit up every moment by the lightning, looking

al as she could possibly have wished herself. ral, she was very cheerful and playful with dren, but something had happened in the hat morning, and she was determined to ie most of it. She greeted them all courte- out scarcely spoke, and left them again as the dessert was on the table. Of the Squire rthur there was no sign.

young people got free soon after this, and the first movement was to catch his quondam the youngest footman. Time was short, as it please the Squire to come down for coffee, and dreaded offending him. "George, old fel- he said, catching him in a passage, "what is in the house? Do tell me."

as Mr. Arthur," said the young man hurriedly. as been having fits, and kept it to himself. can't live three months. That is what is the."

storm swept by, and left a steady down-pour- in. Reginald and Anne had gone away to nt parts of the house, with their childish quar- riling festering between them, and Dora and at together before the wood fire in the great alone and almost silent, complacent in one er's company, comparing notes and exchange- mions on the past and future.

whole of the house was nearly silent; there nly to be heard the whisper of the now distant er, and in distant offices the deadened sounds : great domestic life which it pleased the Squire, use- less ostentation, to keep around him. A an had come in and brought a tray with wine water. The butler had come in a long time and having looked around him, had disap- ead again like a black respectable ghost, who d to assure himself that the other ghosts in great hall were conducting themselves properly, not annoying his master's guests before the prop- or of night. James had not told Dora any- ; about her uncle Arthur; they had arranged to comfortable" together, and were carrying out intention, with the example of Reginald and e before them, by saying the first thing which into either of their heads, and not contradic- ne another (which is the true base of the art nversation), when night suddenly became hide-

I think, when we were first introduced to the ote ménage, there were about a dozen blood- nds. Since then the breed had become valu- , and Mr. George had paid considerable sums of ey for several of them. The Squire never ob- ed to the turning of an honest penny, and had t up the breed, so that there now were some nty of them, and they all began barking and ing at once.

ames and Dora had hardly time to say "Some- y coming," when a step was heard at the hall- r, close opposite to them, and the man who trod t footstep, whether frightened by the horrible se of the dogs, which he had every reason to be- re loose, or anxious to get out of the rain, or ble to find the bell, began rattling at the door h all his might. James, with a certain terror the dogs in his own mind, solved the difficulty by lking across the hall and letting him in.

The man he admitted at once walked half-way ross the hall before he spoke. Then turning to mes he said: "Young gentleman, I guess from ur uniform that you are in the navy. Sea-going notoriously good for the nerves, as Trafalgar ows. But even at Tr-falgar there was no talk of

Lord Nelson being eaten alive by bull terriers. Consequently, I hope you and this young lady will excuse my abrupt entrance. I wish you a good evening, miss, and all good fortune."

He was a lean, sallow, black-whiskered man of a doubtful age. He stood before them dressed in mackintosh, dripping, and they wondered with a very great wonder who he could be.

"You need not be afraid of the dogs, sir," said James. "Mr. Silcote generally keeps them tied up. And there has been no accident with them for above a week. Did you want Mr. Silcote?"

"No," said the man in mackintosh; "unless I am mistaken, I want to speak with this young lady by the fire. Miss Lee, I believe?"

"No," said Dora, rising; "I am not Miss Lee. I am Miss Silcote. Miss Lee is my governess."

"Is not Miss Lee here, then, miss?"

"No," said Dora; "she is not here. She is at my father's house in Lancaster Square."

The man in mackintosh actually swore in the presence of Dora, but apologized for it immediately afterwards. "That is your private inquiry office business, miss, all over. They can't be employed to trace Miss Lee for us, but what they must trace her forty mile too far, and put our people to ten pounds extra expense, if that mattered. By the by," he added, turning to James, "now we are on the spot it may be worth while. Do you know these parts, sir?"

"Pretty well," said James.

"What is the name of that village I came through just now, outside the park gates?"

"Beechwood," said James.

"You don't know the name of Sugden in connection with these parts, do you?" said he in the mackintosh.

"My name is Sugden," said James; "and I was born and bred there."

"Thank you," said the stranger; "and Miss Lee, you say, miss, has not come to spend her holiday here with your grandpa, but is at Lancaster Square? Thank you very much, miss. I am sure I hope you will excuse the mistake of addressing a young lady as the young lady's governess, but Miss Lee was described to me as being of remarkable personal attractions, and so the mistake was perfectly natural. Mr. Sugden, if you are not too nervous to see me out of the avenue, or if any of Mr. Silcote's people had such a thing as a lantern, I should feel more comfortable about getting back to my fly at the lodge. The driver remarked that the Squire objected to hired vehicles in his grounds, and, on remonstrance, said he would see *himself* farther before he'd go a yard farther. You will come with me there? Thank you."

James went with him to the lodge. The man was profoundly respectful to him during their short walk, and on getting into his fly, said,—

"Present instructions are binding, sir. I am not going beyond them when I ask you to present my respectful compliments to your mother. George Thompson is the name, sir. I wish you a very good night."

And so he drove off. And James, returning, found that Dora was gone to bed, and that the only occupant of the hall was the Princess of Castelnuovo, as Mary Queen of Scots, who was standing before the fire with a bedroom candlestick, in an attitude.

"There has been a man here, boy?" she demanded of him.

"Yes, my lady."
 "German?"
 "No, my lady."
 "Italian, then? Do not prevaricate."
 "I am not prevaricating, my lady. The man was an Englishman."

CHAPTER XXII.

ARTHUR GOES TO TEA WITH MISS RAYLOCK.

THERE lived in the village near Silcotes two people called Mr. and Mrs. Jones, in no way remarkable, except that they knew every one about that part of the country; and every one considered them to be so amiable, so inoffensive, and so insignificant, that they found themselves, some three times a week, the repositories of the most important secrets; sometimes, I regret to say, of actionable libels.

And they did n't know why, and no one would tell them. The great fact remains, however,—an undisturbed, good, and undeniable fact. Everybody told them everything.

Sometimes, at first, one used to think that the reason of their being such general confidants was that they were a safe couple, and held their tongues. One might go as far as to say that separately, and at certain times, they *did* hold their tongues, and you got to trust them. But afterwards, when they were both together even, you found that you could get anything out of them you liked. Taken apart, one soon found they were a pair of sieves, and wondered much why they should be elected as the confidants of the neighborhood. You came to the conclusion that they were not so chosen for their reticence, but for the opposite quality. You have many things which you would wish to reach your neighbors' ears, and yet which you would not like to say first-hand. One began to see, after a time, that the Joneses were not so much confidants as vehicles.

A certain now eminent man was once roundly abused in a common room, in which he was not present, by a certain theologian. The mutual friend, the vehicle, brought the intelligence to him, then a struggling man. He had one weapon, and he used it; he had the mutual communicative friend. "He is a ruffian, and drinks!" said he to the mutual friend, knowing that it would be carried faithfully. The knife went between the old theologian's ribs deeper than if the stab had been made first-hand. The retort was false, though not false than the attack; but it hit deeper. Mr. and Mrs. Jones were often used in this way.

They were, at all events, on the very best terms with every one. They were on the most intimate terms with Miss Raylock (Jones had written some novels), and that very dear and good old lady was by no means averse to an innocent accumulation of facts about her neighbors: had not mankind, with its virtues, its foibles, its ways of action, been the study of her life? Was she to lose all interest in her neighbors because she had left off writing uncommonly smart and unmistakable sketches of them? Not at all. Why, Squire Silcote himself stood as hero in her novel of "Cleverness and Credulity." And she naturally was most anxious to see whether or no her guess as to his future would come true. She was in the habit also of declaring humorously among friends that, if she was younger, she would write another novel, and call it "Prig-

gery and Pugnacity," the hero of which should be young Arthur Silcote; for she could not bear the young gentleman at all. She was, in short, a dear old lady, one half of a good gossip herself. She could listen admirably, and in a tentative way, making you talk about your neighbors until she knew what she wanted; and then changing the conversation by a little prudish advice about the evil of talking about your neighbors' affairs. As for getting one word out of her, except what she chose to speak deliberately, that was perfectly hopeless. The other half of the qualities of a really good gossip, a sieve-like incontinence of speech, was wanting in her. She was, therefore, a very intimate acquaintance of the Joneses, who, however, never gratified their curiosity about the Princess, for example, much as they desired it. When they had laid their treasures of hearsay at Miss Raylock's feet, they had only to make the slightest inquiry as to the antecedents of that sainted Princess to make Miss Raylock bridle, and say that they had been talking quite enough about other folks' affairs, and begin talking of agriculture or geology.

She was a perfect old empress in her way. She considered that an invitation to tea with her was of quite as much importance, as great a compliment, as one of those dreadful invitations to Compagnie. The Joneses, who were mildly literary, rich, and very agreeable, were in the habit of "having down" literary men, artists, theatrical people, sometimes also people concerned in the government of the country, noble or other. The Joneses had champagne, pictures, rare books, carriages and horses, flowers, and India-rubber opinions of the most advanced order, suited for all guests, and expressed in the most advanced language; in short, everything which can make life worth having. But the great treat which they proposed to all their guests,—from the Rev. Mr. A. (U. S.), the Baptist missionary of Nevada, to Mr. Z., the ultra-Anglican ceremonialist; from Mr. Dawkins, the man who considered Mr. Bright a half-hearted man, too cautious and compromising, to Mr. Hawkins, the Tory Essex agriculturist,—the treat proposed to all these people was the same. They schemed and fished for an invitation to tea with Miss Raylock. A. and Z., Dawkins and Hawkins,—it was all the same. They believed in Miss Raylock, and these people *must* come to tea with her. If they had never heard of her, that was their ignorance; if they had never read her books, that was their neglect; if they had read them, and did not like them, that was their want of taste. But they must not be allowed to suppose that, because one lived in the provinces, one was getting in the rear of thought. Miss Raylock was the only visible intellectual phenomenon in those parts; and the high honor of going to tea with her was a sacred one.

So these two honest toadies of the good old woman made a queen of her, and kept her to the belief that such honest and good thought as she had uttered in her day, and with some purpose, was still current under her stamp. In the main she was right. The truth she had told was recognized truth still, but it had been handled by fifty hands since, some coarser, some finer than hers. The most ever said about her in the world was now and then by some critic of fiction, who had read her books; and the most that such a man ever said was: "Why old Miss Raylock said the very same thing five and twenty years ago." The old lady knew nothing of all this. She had once been a queen, and she con-

and herself a queen still. And her peremptory refusal to admit Dawkins, the Radical and Atheist (he called him), into her house, is still preserved in the archives of the Jones family. They are a profound respect and fear for the old lady, and does in a way both themselves and the old credit. A shrewd tongue is a great possession. But whether Mrs. Jones had a prouder moment in life than when she broke gently to the great sins, the headlong democrat, the fact that Miss Raylock could not make her principles coincide with giving him tea! Dawkins was not amused, because he was not in possession of facts, and had in his life heard of Miss Raylock. But the up was great for Mrs. Jones. "You are a bold and dangerous man, you Dawkins, but here I am greater than you."

There came one day to call on these Joneses Arthur Silcote, in a rather more pragmatic frame of mind than usual. It was only a day or two after peremptory rejection of Dawkins, and Mrs. Jones, naturally proud of such a very exclusive acquaintance, such a very celebrated personage, because so famous a scholar as Arthur, mentioned it tentally to him.

"Miss Raylock?" he said. "And who is Miss Raylock?"

"She was such an astounding and puzzling rejoinder that Mrs. Jones sat perfectly silent, not having brought up her mind whether to be indignant or grateful. Arthur saved her the trouble.

"O, Miss Raylock," he added quickly; "I know. It is the funny old trot of a mad woman who lives in the village. Of course I know. How stupid I am."

Mrs. Jones said quietly, "She is not mad, Mr. Silcote. She has known you and yours for many years. I am astonished that you should not remember her. Your memory is getting short."

Or one moment, when she said these words, Arthur's eyes twitched and wandered, and a look of anxiety came over his deadly pale beautiful face. He was himself again in a moment, and

"Well, a man with his brain worked like mine cannot remember everything. There is no need to remind him that his memory is breaking and his mind is going" ("his manners too," thought Mrs. Jones), "because he cannot at a moment remember the name of an old mad woman. I remember her perfectly well now, and I beg your pardon. So she did not have the great Dawkins to tea, eh? The old lady. I will show her how I appreciate conduct by going and having tea with her myself this very afternoon."

"Has she asked you?" said Mrs. Jones.

"Not she. I am going to ask myself."

"I would not do that if I were you," replied Mrs. Jones, and then more eagerly, "Pray don't do anything so — so — rash!"

"Rude begins with the same letter as rash," said Arthur; "was that the real word?"

"O dear, no, not at all," replied Mrs. Jones, with the usual emphasis as is allowed to a lady in these times. "But I would not go if I were in your place."

"Why not?"

"Because, if I were in your place, I should not think of doing anything of the kind."

Seeing that Mrs. Jones had retired behind the awkward of female reiteration — and a terribly long one it is — Arthur laughed, and departed on

his rather rude and self-sufficient errand. He remembered Miss Raylock well enough now, but somehow had got to think she was dead. There are some old people whom we always hesitate to inquire after on our return to our native village. Arthur had been living very fast, I mean intellectually fast, and Miss Raylock had got confused in his mind with some one else. Things *did* get confused to him now sometimes; he *felt* it, though he would not acknowledge it to himself; and it vexed him, and made him angry. He was in one of his later and (may I say it of one who was really a noble person?) more ill-conditioned moods when he rang at Miss Raylock's garden gate.

It was Miss Raylock's love of beauty which, in the first instance, made her write tales at all; it was her intense love of order which made her write them so well. Having retired wisely and nobly, with her prestige untouched, from her task of telling the beauty of order to the world with her pen, she had expressed it to herself and the few friends who came to see her in her house and her garden. People for whom even the Joneses dared not ask an invitation to tea were allowed to see her garden, — a maze of flowers, from the time when the Christmas roses raised their pale heads from the frosty ground, to the time when the last chrysanthemum drooped his bold head before the

"Hungry wind that went wandering about
Like a wolf which has smelt a dead child out."

Of the exquisite order of her quaint little cottage we need not speak here. It is only the beauty of her garden with which we have to do. This old maid, whose pride it was never to have had a lover, had an intense love for certain forms of beauty. And even in her devotion to her flowers you found, when you came to know her well, that the old feeling in favor of order was stronger than the almost equally strong feeling for ostentatious gaudy coloring. A coreopsis was dearer to her than a prize balsam, — the perfect folding of the old moss-rose, or the Souvenir de Malmaison, dearer to her than the rich barbarity of color with the inferior and lower form of such a rose as Ophirie.

It was high summer-time on the afternoon of which we speak, and the whole of the garden flamed and blazed with rows and piles of well-ordered color. What little green there was was as smooth as a billiard table; the gravel, scarcely less smooth than the grass, was guiltless of a leaf or a straw: the whole place was faint with a thousand scents, hot and quiet, — one vivid blaze of brilliant painting, under a bright summer sun: and in the midst of it all, alone in the sunlight, utterly colorless in face, stood Arthur Silcote, in black from head to foot, a wonderful foil to all the bright color around him.

There was beauty of a rare kind, and order of a rare kind, in him too, — of a rarer and higher kind than any which could be found in the very best flower in Miss Raylock's garden. But Miss Raylock, after having said to her little maid, "Let him in," could not see it, and said, looking through her drawing-room window, "Aha! my young gentleman! and so you are there. I shall begin to believe in the Princess's table-rapping soon!"

Arthur was let in by the door which led into the garden, and took his solitary black figure from among the brilliant flowers and the bright sun into the dark little drawing-room of Miss Raylock. The common or combination room of a college is not the very best place for studying the habits and ways of

ladies, but Arthur's nose was by this time sufficiently educated to tell him that he was in the drawing-room of a lady. There was nothing to guide him to any conclusion but his nose, for, coming out of the brilliant sun, and more brilliant flowers, his eyes were perfectly useless; his ears also were of very little use to him, for Miss Raylock stood up perfectly still and silent, eying him with intense curiosity, like a cunning little old bird.

"How much do you know, and what is the amount of your influence, my little gentleman?" she said to herself, but remained silent just long enough to give Arthur time to see that he had done a very impertinent thing. Seeing a dim gray figure before him, and feeling that he must go through with his adventure, he of course spoke first.

"I have come to pay you a visit, Miss Raylock."

"You got my invitation to tea, then?" said the old lady; "that is right."

Arthur felt deeply foolish, but he could not lie in the very least degree under any circumstance whatsoever. He had therefore to answer, "No."

"That is not wonderful," said the inexorable old lady, "seeing that it never was written. And though I certainly do want to see you, yet I doubt if it would ever have been written. I don't like you, young gentleman, and so I warn you; shall I tell you why?"

"I don't think we should gain anything by that, Miss Raylock," said Arthur, laughing, and perfectly at his ease. She was using his own weapons, and he was perfectly at home with them. "The reason of my visit here is very simple. I was given to understand that your tea-drinkings were very exclusive businesses, and I determined at once that I would drink tea with you uninvited. I should do the same thing (with different tactics) if I was defied to appear at one of the Duchess of Cheshire's balls."

"That is very neat," said Miss Raylock; "at least, very neat for a Silcote. The Duchess of Cheshire and myself, as leaders of exclusion, would, you imply, be both flattered by having their Olympus scaled by such a giant as yourself."

"That is not quite so neat as my pretty speech, my dear madam; and I think you will find that in real life badinage rapidly deteriorates in point after the first few retorts, and the common room is not a bad school for repartee. Suppose we drop it. The question is, have I earned my tea by my impudence?"

"You have."

"Let then ring the bell, if you can see where it is; and then there be peace between us."

He had calculated on her being amused and pleased by his "bumptiousness," and he had reckoned right. Besides, he knew the old lady was fond of celebrities (her "Recollections" prove that), and he was in his way an eminent man. She began to feel friendly towards him, and had no reason to be afraid of him. She confessed to herself that, if her object had been to match her brains against his, she would have felt afraid. Her object only was to speak of certain things and names, and see how they affected him. They were very soon quite comfortable together. She was a shrewd and pleasant talker, in addition to being a wonderfully well-posted woman. Lord Balliol, who at one time that afternoon really had half forgotten about her, found that she was very pleasant, and that he was enjoying himself. Italy was the subject she chose to

stick to, and, the shrewd Arthur believed, because had never been there, and she wanted to show. But she showed off very charmingly; so much that when she said, "Did you notice my flower he was rather sorry that she had changed the conversation.

"I noticed them, and they were very beautiful. Stay, that is *façon de parler*. They were too good; almost barbarically gaudy."

"You are right," she said. "But when you are as old as I am, and your eyes get dim, and your bones get cold, you will pine, as I do, for color and warmth, even though it be barbaric. These long English winters, without light, without sun, or, without warmth, make one sigh for the sunny winters of Italy."

And, though the old lady spoke of dimmed and chilled bones, her eyes were as bright and as acquisitive as a jackdaw's, and her attitude of intense curiosity spoke of anything but a rheumatic age. The room perhaps was too dark for Arthur to notice this, and he only said, "I wonder you do not go to Italy, Miss Raylock. You have spent the winter there, then?"

"One or two," she said, sitting back in her chair. "One very pleasant one. Let me see. When we have at Florence that year? Let me see. I was there, and remember. There were Pozzo and Castelnovo; one ought to put the blame on the gentleman, though," and here she looked at him intensely: "and their factotum, Krieger, who murdered the postilion," — (speaking very slowly,) — "at least he was proved not to have murdered him; but then, as we all believed he did, I was very charming and romantic to have a man who knew to be an Austrian, and whom we thought to be a murderer, as major-domo; but I am getting below stairs. We novelists, you know, study ranks in life, from duty. And then we had Scraggi, the Greek, — a charming person, but I think a sad rogue. How he got his name together I leave to a fellow and tutor of Balliol. And then there were the Hathertons, from Boston, — most charming specimens of the very best kind of American; and the Lennoxes, from New Orleans, — equally charming; and last, not least, my dear old friend, Count Frangipanni, the patriot. You know him, of course?"

Arthur did not. She saw that he knew nothing of any of these people except his father and mother. She went on. There was another name she kept in reserve, and she watched for the effect of it on him.

"We had a very pleasant winter, I assure you. I suppose it is wrong for English artists, authors, poets, and so on, to leave these muddy skies for clearer ones; but they do. Heine twits us with it. The best poetess is there now, saying all kinds of things about the future of Italy to English ears, when she might be as well employed in singing the woes of the agricultural laborers at home. However, I have done the same thing in my time. I had a charming old villa, — not at all like Dickens' 'Pink Jail,' — and used to receive these people. They are uncomfortable, though, those Italian country houses, in winter. There is no preparation for cold. A place like Upton is worth all of them together in winter. Do you know Upton?"

"I know it well. I should think that Samuel Rende must have painted 'Sorites' Hall' or the 'Haunted House' from it."

"I should think," said Miss Raylock. "You w Ufton, do you? And how, for instance?" m much interested in St. Mary's College in hire, and that is the nearest great house to cnow it well, — a place of bats and owls; the perfect specimen of what they call a Tudor y-house I have ever seen."

"How far is it from the college?"

"About six miles."

"You know that the upholsterers are in it, at they are doing it up, — that the owner is g back?"

"O. I have heard nothing, and care to know g about it. I suppose I shall lose the run of ounds now."

"You at all events know the name of the propri- who is coming back from Italy to live there?" can't say I can remember it."

"Sir Godfrey Mallory."

"I looked more keenly than ever at him now. nly answered, without any change of feature, a! descendant of the man who wrote 'Morte thur,' I suppose. Is he an old goose? I'll him believe about the 'Morte D'Arthur,' and e run of the place again."

"Then you never heard of him?"

"Never in my life," said Arthur.

"He knows nothing," thought Miss Raylock; and egan to get impatient. "Have you any influ- over your aunt, the Princess?" she said.

"A little. But what degree of influence?"

"Can you prevent her doing a silly thing?"

"No. Can you?"

"I don't want repartee; I want sense. Can you ent her going to Ufton, or going to Italy, or g to Vienna? Can you prevent your father, maundering and daundering down in his idle- to that foolish college? There, you are no whatever; but can you take a message? Give Betts my most respectful compliments, and tell that I expect him here to tea at five o'clock to- row. I have not the honor of his acquaintance, low; but there, I am a lone unprotected woman, this interview has been scandalously long. If dear neighbors say anything unpleasant about e remember, on your honor, that it was of your king. Go along with you, Master Oxford, and t't tread on my flower-beds. Send me Betts, will i? Send me Betts."

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN WHICH DORA DISCOVERS A SECRET.

THE beds at Silcotes were more comfortable than e beds of St. Mary's; and besides there was no ght o'clock chapel there, and indeed no apology substitute for anything of the sort. Arthur, in s earlier and more vigorous development, had rtainly tried prayers, but habit had been against m, and had beaten even him. Nay, the great nglish institution of breakfast was in that estab- lishment a mere form, so diluted that, when the ouse was full of such people as still cared to go ere for the shooting, it was merely changed, by a ttle vigorous action on the part of the butler, into mch. No times were kept in that house before even o'clock, and then woe be to the man who was ate down to dinner, and cared for soup.

I believe that the first thing which an English

schoolboy looks forward to, when he comes to you for the holidays, is a regular good lie in bed of a morning, — a "swink." I think they call it; at all events they used to call it so. Ask the next young gentleman you have over to spend his vacation with you at what hour he would wish to be called. If I am wrong he will no doubt correct me. And again your sailor fresh from a voyage, or your traveller pressed for time, will inform the schoolboy as to the great fact that there is nothing like bed of a morning. Charles Lamb again, a man from whom I am informed there is no appeal just now, goes with them, or I should say went with them, and lay abed till he chose to get up.

It was therefore perfectly natural for James to lie long and sleep heavily the morning after the storm, and when he awoke it was with a start, and with his old keen swift look around him, for he felt in his sleep that some one was looking at him, and lo! the Squire himself sitting on the bed, and holding in his hand a large clumsy key.

"Hallo!" cried the Squire, "you can't have much on your conscience if you sleep like that. I have been staring at you ever so long. I am going out all day, and so I have brought you the key."

"Thank you, sir," said James, not quite clear as to what key it was.

"Yes," said Silcote. "I have kept it locked up ever since she went. I had a great respect for your mother. A downright plain-spoken woman, but a lady, a perfect lady. Do you see much of her now?"

"I have never seen her, sir, since the day she left me at school."

"So she has stuck to her resolution," thought the Squire; "a most remarkable woman! She has taken what I said somewhat too literally. Do you ever hear from her?"

"Once every year, just merely telling me to be steady, and saying we shall meet some day."

"And where is she, and what is she doing?"

"I have no idea."

"Indeed! was there no postmark on the letter?"

"Only London, sir. I suppose you don't happen to know where they are? I should like to see my father again."

"Very creditable. But I have no idea. A few days after you went to school they came to the steward with their key, carrying heavy bundles. And they walked off eastward, and were lost in a mist, and from that time to this not a word has been heard of them. Do you think you would remember her?"

"I am very doubtful of it, sir. And I fear she would not know me."

Silcote laughed. "Not much fear of that," he said. "But I will go. I have one of my riding fits on, and shan't be at home before dinner. By the by, if you were to bring your mind to bear on getting up it might be as well, for it is past eleven," and, laying the key on the bed, he went away.

James came thoughtfully down stairs, and found that the breakfast-room was empty, and that the others had all breakfasted and dispersed; there was only one plate laid, and on it a letter addressed to him.

It was in an easy running business hand, with, boldly emphatic initial letters and tails. It was as follows, —

"HONORED SIR: Thinking that it would save time if you would kindly put me in possession of

the address of your mother, Mrs. Sugden, I venture to ask you for it. I go to London by the next train: and so perhaps you will be so good as to telegraph it to my employers, Messrs. Barrett and Hall, Lincoln's Inn Fields. I see now that I was wrong not to have asked you for it last night, when we stood face to face; but I was a little put out by finding she had left Beechwood. Apologizing for giving you so much trouble through my neglect,

"I remain,

"Your most obedient
and humble servant,
"GEORGE THOMPSON."

His old friend, the young servant, evidently detailed for the service by collusion with the butler, brought in breakfast alone. This breakfast was a most sumptuous and elaborate piece of business. Silcote had taken a fancy to this youth, and probably gave some hint about his being royally entertained: at all events, he was so entertained, and with no one but his old friend to wait on him. His first act, I am happy to say, on seeing the coast perfectly clear, was to shake hands with his old friend, and look at him admiringly. They then lapsed into conversation.

"Who brought this letter, Joe?" he asked.

"A messenger from the Red Lion at Newby, the first thing this morning."

"It is to ask about my mother's address," said James.

"You had best send it to them at once. He is a lawyer's clerk, and seems to have come, in the first instance, after Miss Lee. But, when he found he was close to Beechwood, he drove down to the Bull, late as it was, and knocked them up, asking where Mrs. Sugden lived. And they told him they did n't know, and that nobody knew; for that she and her husband had been gone away this five year. And then he cursed owdacious, he did. And he had sixpenn'orth of rum hot, and he give the driver half a pint of beer, and he got in and he drove off, cussing like one o'clock. Your mother has come into some property, in my opinion; and you had best let them lawyers know where she is, or they'll put the whole of it into Chancery, to make business; and then a fine lot your mother will ever see of it. Eat some more of that omelette; and don't let out that we was familiar together. Hogworth" (the butler) "warned me that he'd like to catch me at it; and he is a tartar. But I have been doing on it all the same, you see. So long as you don't mind, I'll chance all about he."

"I mind, old fellow?" said James, quickly; "do you take me for a snob?"

"Never a bit," said the other. "Only I must say, in self-defence, that you do look the gentleman all over. And so I was a bit scared. There! Now, how is your mother? Your mother was a kind and good woman to me."

"I don't know," replied James. "I have never set eyes on her since the day I went to school."

"Never seen your mother! Well, I suppose we all get over that sort of thing in time. But I always was a young mammy-bleater, and I thought you were in the same boat. Why, I never see a boy that hankered after his mother more than what you did. Not that you ever wanted pluck any more than me. Do you remember your turn up with Bates of the Blue Lion, the time his gang came after the Squire's pheasants, and found Captain Tom at home, and your father awake?"

"I remember," said James.

"Pluck don't go by a chap's caring for his us. I've had two or three rough-and-tumbles: one three months ago, over that question. But I think you was — so to put it — in that line yourself heard about Sam Bates, of course?"

"No."

"Lor, you gentlemen hear nothing. He married Mrs. Vidley, of the Bear, and he has sold his fishing-nets, all except the long flew; and he sold his dogs, all except Nip, the white terrier, the black ear, that is up still, in spite of age, for the championship, and that bustin' out by Bobby; and he has sold all his ferrets, except two white uns; and he has sold all his guns, and his new French breech-loader; and all his game except his big partridge-net, for which there's a customer, and a dozen or so of rabbit-net, for accommodation of customers and neighbors. He is a reformed character altogether. He has sold out a spirit-licence, and gone into the road, and is churchwarden, and heads the opposition to the rector in the matter of chanting the Canon in consequence of the rector refusing to give a teenpence a ton for the coals for the church, and above the usual price. He is up to the eyes of games, I tell you. We must have Mr. Bates down on him soon. But about your mother: I had better send them that address."

How little had he thought of her? That was our business. Less, actually, than the Squire. I cannot give names to every phase of human passion. Can any one? One can only speak of what one knows, and it would be well for the advance of human knowledge if every one were as honest as I. If one speaks of a sentimental fact, however unimportant, one will be accused of sentimentalism. One must grin and bear it. There came this lad James, all in one moment, a gust of tenderness for his mother. (I use the words I said to me. They are unclassical, but they are fully true: ask the first American you meet.) The remembrance of his mother came on him suddenly and seemed to flood his soul; but the flood was poured out of his eyes. He was not of the cry sort. He walked out on the terrace perfectly dry-eyed. But there was a pang, a spasm, at his heart which told him that he had most basely forgot the pleasantest companion, the wisest friend, the most loving overlooker of defects, the most generous, and honest critic, that ever man had. He had forgotten his mother: and here was Dora, vancing from among the flower-beds, — good Mrs. Dora, — perfectly ready to take her place.

This boy and girl were very fond of one another. Boys and girls do get very fond of one another at that early age; but we have not much to do with that; we have more to do with older folk. So we must say, however, that Dora was determined to spend a long day in his company, and found him in this low and most properly penitential frame of mind about his mother. She had expected to find him in a holiday mood, charmed and full of wonder at the glories of Silcotes, ready to give up the day to her and wander away, sketching and romancing, to the highest point of the forest to the swan island on the river. He was prepared to do none of the kind, but told her everything, and then proposed to her to go with him and look at the old targe. She encouraged him in his mood, pointed out to him how heartlessly he had behaved, and consented to undertake the pilgrimage to the old

which he held the key in his hand. Did she hat this bright-eyed young artist lad was one most charming companions in the world? We know that he had a shrewd tongue in his and that she was a little bit afraid of it? Did she at getting an advantage over him, and quieted his tongue for one day at least; him in his best and most sentimental mood? is is quite possible, because she was a very young lady indeed. She immediately agreed to the old cottage with him.

ery sharp, shrewd, and keen young lady in- with a naturally quick intellect, with great al courage and determination, all of which es had been considerably sharpened by the o-mouth life she had led in her father's house Lancaster Square, — pure, noble, good in every yet not without *knowledge* of evil. A girl it up by a Miss Lee, among housemaids, is not at a knowledge of evil, although they may vil more deeply than if they were ignorant of it.

you ever see a deserted cottage? Samuel has given us more than one deserted man- and pathetic and beautiful they are indeed. o me (possibly because I have been connected he artisan and laboring class so intimately all e) a deserted cottage is more romantic than a ed mansion. The desolation of the Tilney estate is one thing, the ruin of a small cottage ther. The revenues of the Tilney estate still uid in by the farmers, and there are heirs, and ropery will recover, and a new house will be

There is hope there. But in a deserted cot- the element of hope is wanting. A new six- ed brick one may be built, and it will be better l parties, but the old folks are gone — to the ouse. One seldom sees such a thing within a ed miles of London, but one does sometimes. ain, when you see a deserted cottage you see ou have come to the very lowest verge of ruin. are is very near the hearthstone.

e seldom sees such a thing on the most neglect- ate, but these two young people saw one that and it was a great contrast to the well-kept ens of Silcotes. The garden was a jungle. The had grown till they could flower no longer; the had spread out from their roots till they were re mass of yellow flowerless vegetation; the der was represented by a few sticks; while the brub had tangled itself over the porch until it roken the frail wood, and made it necessary to r your head as you put the key in the door.

It is awfully lonely here," said James. "I knew y plant and flower; they were like living things e. And now they are all stretching out their at us and speaking. Do you hear them?" No. What do they say?"

Neglect! Neglect!" Quite right if they do," said Dora. "You are ing foolish, getting too artistic. Open the door, let me in."

I am afraid," said James.

Well, I am with you, and I am certainly not id. What are you afraid of?"

Suppose, when you opened that door and went that deserted house, you were to see my mother ding waiting for us beside the cold hearth? at effect would that have on you, Dora?"

Well, I suppose I should be frightened out of wits. But I'll chance it; all the more be- se I know that nothing of the kind is at all ly to take place."

"Do you believe in ghosts?"

"I am sorry to say I do. It is very lamentable and humiliating; but, if my Aunt Mary had been your aunt, you would do the same."

"I believe that we shall see my mother's ghost the moment we enter that door," said James.

"But she is n't dead," said Dora.

"That don't matter," said James.

"Don't it?" said Dora. "Well, there is one way out of the difficulty. Give me the key, and let me go in first. You are actually frightening me now, with your nonsense. Give me the key, and let us go in. I am ashamed of you."

She took the key from him, and with a little difficulty opened the door, and they passed in together. There was no ghost to be seen. A certain kind of spider, which I have never been able to identify, had spun great webs in every available part of the little kitchen, — a sort of spider who, it strikes one, is contented with very small gains, say three per cent; contented with one or two wandering flies in a twelvemonth; quite distinct from your speculative devil-may-care autumnal spider, who spreads his net in the gooseberry bushes, and goes in for fifty per cent of late bluebottles, — a short life, and a merry one. Likewise there was a toad, who cast his beautiful eyes up to these two beautiful young creatures, as if asking what they, in all the power of their youth and their beauty, meant to do with him, the careful old keeper of this neglected house.

Dust, — dull gray dust, everywhere; on the floor, on the solitary dresser, the last of the fixtures, on the jambs of the windows, everywhere. A dull gray color of dust, like discolored London snow, settled down over everything; a gray dust which had toned down everything like wood color everywhere, except in one place. Among the gray ashes of the long-cold hearth lay irregular pieces of paper, some only torn, some half burnt. And Dora saw them; and she spread herself before the fireplace to the full expanse of her crinoline, and she said, —

"James, my dear, where is the little room in which you were sleeping when you were roused by the poachers? You remember. Our first introduction, you know. I should very, very much like to see it."

"Up aloft here, and then turn to the right," said James. "Come up, and let me show you the old place."

"I am a little tired," said Dora, "and should like to sit still. Go up yourself: I think, under the circumstances, that it would be better for you to go up alone. You may come down and fetch me up when you choose."

He had hardly got on the first stair when she began to turn over the half torn, half burnt letters which lay amidst the ashes. She was shrewd and keen, and had heard the servants talk and joke, both at Silcotes and at Lancaster Square. The first glance at these letters showed her that there was a mystery here for which she was utterly unprepared. The letters were all in one handwriting, — and it was not the writing she expected to find by any means, — they were in the large bold hand of her uncle Thomas; and were many of them signed by his name.

CHAPTER XXIV

AND KEEPS IT TO HERSELF.

"AND," thought out poor Dora, while James was lumbering about overhead, "if he ever finds out

this truth, he is a ruined man for life. I'll burn them all."

One must do her the credit to say that she was a wonderfully shrewd and determined girl. There was no chance of getting fire within half a mile. James was in a very sentimental mood about his mother; and she knew that the moment he noticed these old letters he would wish to read them. Yet she, without fire, was entirely determined that they should be burnt without being read.

He came slowly down after a little while, and she began at him.

"How dreadfully close the room smells; like a vault."

"But there are no dead men here," said James. "Your nose is too aristocratic, Dora. We are well enough used to this close smell."

"And to low fever," replied Dora. "Fudge; don't begin the dramatic repartee style of conversation just now. It is very pleasant, I don't doubt, when you always get the best of it; which you, by the way, never do. As a vehicle for conveying human thoughts from one soul to another, I should say that the epigrammatic form of dialogue was weaker, shallower, and sillier than any other. If any true souls ever got *en rapport* through dramatic dialogue, they must have been the souls of two most incalculably shallow geese. I say that the place smells like a vault. And so it does. You say that there are no dead men here, but there are dead folks' memories. Dead folks had much better be burnt. When I die I shall go in for incremation."

"You had better go in for it before, or you will find it too late. Who is talking nonsense now?" asked James.

"I am; but that is no business of yours. The place smells of dead folks' bones, and I hate the smell. I wish you would light your pipe, James. Don't say you have not got one, because I know better."

"I thought you did not like smoking?"

"I like it here. Light your pipe, and let us have a comfortable talk. And it is cold. Cannot we light a fire?"

James, like most schoolboys in these days, was provided with a pipe, tobacco, and matches. He very soon lit his pipe, and began smoking. When he had smoked for a minute or two he said, —

"I always thought that you spoke the truth."

"So I do," said Dora, looking sadly guilty.

"As in the present instance," said James. "Well, I have lit my pipe, which was the first thing you asked me to do; and, as for the second, I will do it for you directly. You want a little fire to warm you. I will make it with those half torn, half burnt letters of my mother's which are lying among the ashes, and about which you have been trying to deceive me."

There was not much which was romantic about Dora. "The only fat Silcote since the Fall," Miss Raylock called her once. But, "the only fat Silcote since the Fall" did become, on this occasion, somewhat romantic and powerful. This is the spectacle of a fat, good-natured girl, standing before a fireplace, and scolding a schoolboy; but hear what she said, with her finger pointed at him, as he lounged against the table smoking, and then judge.

"You are right about my having tried to deceive you, and my having failed. You are right about those letters referring to your mother, but you shall never see them, and for two reasons: — first, because I will prevent you by sheer force; and, sec-

ondly, because you dare not look at them. I dare you read your mother's letters?"

The pipe was put out now; but he threw a lot of matches on the damp brick floor at Dora's and went out.

He waited for her outside in the beech wood; they walked together, down hill, towards the river side by side, silent for a time. He spoke first; she was resolute in silence.

"What was in those letters?"

"How should I know?" said Dora.

"Did not you read them then?"

"I am not in the habit of reading other people's letters. I may be deceitful, but I never do that."

"Then why did you keep me from them?"

"Because on every ground it was infinitely your business than any one else's. And, mind, I have been accused of deceit to-day, and I don't like it. It is not a pleasant thing, you know. But I knew the handwriting, and I was determined that you should not see it. How much do you care for that? We were brought into the world, James, to disagree, and I think only to love one another better for our disagreements. We have both been brought up in hard schools, James, and we must make the best of one another. Now for the next."

They got a boat, these two, and rowed several miles and miles down the pleasant reaches of the river, among the beautiful islands of the river. And Dora, who had thus early made it part of her scheme of her life to know everything and do everything, must, among other things, learn to row. And James had to teach her, and steer, which, as the whole, was very pleasant. When she looked out of the boat to see how her sculls were getting on, he would say, "Eyes in the boat now; look at me." When she, in her pains-taking efforts to keep her lower lip, he said, "Don't make faces; put your mouth straight, you know, and look at me"; and he pouted out her mouth prettily enough, and looked at him. And when he said, "Now mind about the feathering; when you are at your farthest point forward, turn your wrists just a quarter of a circle"; she said, —

"Thank you very much. Verbal instructions are quite sufficient. You are not my uncle Arthur any more than I am Miss Lee. And you are not teaching me to play chants on the schoolroom piano."

And James said, "Oho!" and relinquished the practical part of his task.

And Dora said, "Oho!" also.

And James said, "And so he teaches her chess on the schoolroom piano, does he?"

"No, he don't," said Dora.

"I thought you said he 'does.' That is some places down for grammar, by jingo."

"I did not," said Dora.

"Why! —"

"Why?" snatched up Dora, "because she won't let him. He did a year or less ago. But she won't have it now. Can you keep a secret?"

"No; but you had better tell it to me, for I know you cannot keep it to yourself."

"Well," said Dora, complacently, "I suppose I can't. If I could I should certainly not have invited you to share it. But I believe that Miss Lee has turned Roman Catholic."

"I say, Dora," said James, aghast; "think what an awful thing you are saying. You have no right

; such an awful accusation against anybody clear proof, you know." "Don't bring any accusations. I only say what," said Dora, attending carefully to her scull-d hitting herself severely in the ribs every time she brought her sculls out of water. "I at I think: I always did; and, as far as any idle purposeless mortal like you or me can, I always mean to. I believe that she has Roman Catholic."

"Why?" "Well, 'why' is a short sentence. I believe it is very rare in society to address a lady in something less than a monosyllable. My answer is that we change the conversation. It appears that the lawyer's clerk is looking up her and your name at the same time. I wonder what those two have been doing."

"Now, Beatrix!" "Now, Benedict. Come, let us leave sharpening our silly little wits on one another. How are the buildings at St. Mary's getting on?" "Keep your eyes in the boat. I am lord and lady here. They are going on very well."

"Keep your eyes?" "No, the buildings. I thought you were going to leave sharpening your silly little wits on me. I, my lady. The buildings are going on very well, I believe. They have made a confounded mess about the place with their bricks and mortar, have dug some holes. But Chaos before Cosy you know."

"Gracious!" said Dora; "what long words we are getting to use!"

"Not at all," said James; "they are short. I do your rowing."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FINAL DEVELOPMENT OF ST. MARY'S.

"LOOK at your cowcubers and marrows again, for instance," said Mr. Betts to the Squire on one occasion: "you put a thing like a little piece of wood chip into the ground, and in two months your old gardener comes to you and tells you that your row-vine has got over the wall into the neighbor's garden, and that the neighbor objects, being jealous, on the score of temptation. I was thinking of my own little crib in Islington, then, but the result remains the same, Squire. An idea is like a gettable marrow. It grows and develops so uncommonly quick, that before you can look round, like a railway scheme, for instance, that before you have eaten half a dozen marrows, you find your row-vine neighbor—worshipping in a different circle from what conviction, and a daughter which took to religion late, but with all her father's determination, have brought you to—going about with you quite savage, on the score of temptation. I illustrate this to you as a metaphor, Squire. I took up with this idea of St. Mary's Hospital quite casual. But it has grown on my hands until it has overgrown the neighbor's walls. Sir Hugh Brockliss is grumbling again."

"Confound the ass!" said Silcote.

"Not at all," said Betts. "Although by your influence I have just been carried in triumphantly to the office of treasurer, and am provided for handsomely for life; and although I take this opportunity of giving you my most sincere thanks,—but

there's a pair of us, ain't there? you like the receiving of thanks as little as I like giving 'em,—although Sir Hugh may be an ass, and, in regard to barts, generally, I hold that they are neither the one thing nor the other: yet still I say, don't confound him. He don't want any confounding. What he may have to learn from you I don't know,—I ain't a gentleman: but you have a great deal to learn from him. And, what is much more important, we want his name. In what I am going to do we want a good name, and his is a good one. Not first-class, you say, but still it is one which will go down, for want of a better, with the High Church Liberals; and unless we get them we had better put the money into the Illinois Central."

"What the deuce are you going to do with me now?" said Silcote.

"Sir Hugh Brockliss," continued Mr. Betts, "has got a good and most respectable name, and we must have it. Therefore you be civil to him: at least, as civil as you can manage. We must have one tolerably respectable name. I should like a bigger one than his, but we have n't got it, and must do the job with the materials. He is all against the whole thing, but he is, as you so shrewdly said, an ass, and will believe the last thing that is said to him. And so I want you to be civil to him, because I intend to go into the moderately High Church business; it is the paying one, Squire, and I mean to make this thing pay. And for that we want names, and his name is the only respectable one we have got."

"There is mine," said the Squire; "is that no use?"

"Lor' bless you," said Betts, "a deal worse than no name at all. It's a lucky thing for you, Squire, that your father was born before you. If you had had to grub about for your own fortune, you would be in No. 1A, Queer Street, just now. A name is a marketable thing in England, as any fool knows; but you have made such a mess of your name that I, even I, can't discount it, and am obliged to discount Sir Hugh Brockliss instead of you."

"You rather maze me, Betts. What have I done?"

"Done? Nothing; about the worst thing you could do in these steam-engine days; and talked a heap of nonsense the while."

"As a matter of curiosity, my dear Betts, may I ask you what you wish me to do?"

"I wish you to be civil to Sir Hugh Brockliss. We must have a name, and yours is no good."

"I submit to you. I will be civil to Sir Hugh Brockliss. Any further directions?"

"There is another bart, whose property, as they say, 'impinges' on ours at St. Mary's, who ought to be conciliated. Do you know his name?"

"No."

"Then I don't; for the nonce."

"Now, sir," growled Silcote.

"Furthermore," said Betts, "I think it would be much better if you left off going to the Board. I do, indeed."

"And why, for instance?"

"There are many reasons," said Betts. "It is a long way, for instance; and again—"

"And, again, Sir Godfrey Mallory is come back, and you and Miss Rylock don't think that it is right for me to run the chance of coming against him. What asses you people are! Women of course think, and always will, that they can set wrong things right by advice. That is nothing new."

They will have power somehow, as the Wife of Bath knew. But look at yourself. Do you know what you are? You are a bankrupt stockbroker, a man whom I have made over again. You owe me everything, and five minutes ago you were prepared to take possession of me, body and bones, and order me about like a schoolboy. I took you up, because you pleased me; if you cease to please me, I shall put you down again. Have the goodness to understand that I am master, and you are servant. Have you brains enough for that?"

"I did n't mean any offence, sir."

"A fox don't mean any offence. But he gives it. He can't help it. Now look you here. You have been alluding to Sir Godfrey Mallory."

"I never mentioned his name, sir."

"How I could make you lie, if I took the trouble. You know you mentioned him; and, while you were in your bantam-cock vein, you said you did not know his name 'for the nonce.' Now you mind what you are about. If you ever dare to go into, in any way, my relations with that man, I'll smash you. That is plain enough, is it not?"

It certainly was.

"And I'll have no colloquing with that old Miss Raylock. She has never had anything to do in her lifetime but mind other folks' business, and, when she found anything worth writing about, to hang up her neighbors before the public, for about five hundred pounds apiece. She is living on the proceeds of her wicked old iniquity now. The interest in me, and in her knowledge of my inconceivable wrongs, is enough to pay her butcher and baker at this day. And, again, I'll have no colloquing with my sister. She may, or may not, be a fool, but she saved my life, I believe, at the risk of her own. And I will not have you in communication with Kriegsthum. I am perfectly aware that your connection with him began in some queer business about foreign bonds, but it must end now. I don't know that I have any more hints to give you at present, but when I have, you shall get them hot and heavy. Stay, one more. Old Raylock or my sister, or some fool, has evidently given you some notion about my former domestic relations. Now leave these matters alone, will you? You don't know how to handle such matters. On one or two occasions I have seen you speak up like a man for my eldest son Algernon. I liked you for that. But, once for all, understand that you are too coarse a hand to touch on any domestic relations of mine. Now go on. You have some scheme on hand. Go on."

"Well, sir, that is rather difficult, after your late outbreak."

"Difficult! I suppose it is difficult; but I never said that a beaten dog hunted free. You have had the travel taken out of you, have you. There, let us leave quarrelling. I have ten times your brains, and fifty times your determination. And I have venison, champagne, a most neat sort of sherry, considerable influence, and a strong personal liking for yourself. In exchange for all these good things I merely ask you to amuse me, and to let things, which a man in your position can't in the least understand, alone. Amuse me, therefore. What is this wonderful scheme of yours? Let us have it."

Mr. Betts unfolded it to him, and we will do so to the reader.

"O, but he is a brimstone," Mr. Betts remarked in confidence to Algy afterwards. "I went a ha'porth too far, and did n't I catch it! All our tongues are unruly members, I am given to under-

stand. But Smith O'Brian ain't a more unmember than his. I know I ain't going to run a risk of it again."

It will have been seen from the above conversation, that Mr. Betts was now treasurer of St. Mary's. The old treasurer having, as Mr. Betts expressed it, "dropped," and the Silcock influence, since its retirement in dudgeon of Sir Hugh Brockton, a supreme, Mr. Betts had been appointed. Sir Hugh described the business as a shameful job, and rather made Betts wince. Because, if Sir Hugh could not swallow that, if he called that a job on earth would he say when the enormous profit and audacious job which was just then being tured in the stock-broking brain of Mr. Betts unfolded to him, as it must be in the course of business?

However, there he was, treasurer, and a splendid treasurer he made. As the Square most truly said to the Board, "You could not get another man in all England so good for the money." He was a most excellent man of money.

But he was more. If he was one thing more than another, he was a speculator. His splendid knowledge of finance had prevented him making more than one false step in his life. And for years of his bankruptcy he was a shipwrecked, poor man who felt mean; and again still measuring every one of his feeble little schemes went wrong, they did, for want of money. But the moment he found himself in a high position again, the moment he had the handling of considerable sums of money, the old passion revived.

The man had poetry in him somewhere, and it found vent in the only way it could. The money education will always be used to bring out the poetry which may happen to be in him. Look at Queen Matys. Betts had had but one education, the education of money. The poetry in the man, his creative power, was forced to express itself in money. To make three or four sovereigns out of one—a make a fortune—was his kind of poetry. He didn't want the money. He did not want the money worth. He only wanted to use what seemed to him a creative faculty, and make it. Look round, as I see if I am not right. Are the money-makers money-spenders? And are they ever contented when they are in their coffins, any more than a poet is contented with verse-making until his hand is too feeble to hold the pen?

His idea was this: The revenues of St. Mary's were little inferior to those of Eton. The demand for good schools was just setting in. Why should he not make St. Mary's the greatest school in England. He determined that he would try.

All this was perfectly fair. Betts was only a specimen of one kind of British merchant, the kind who can't have the handling of money without trying to "turn it over." He now, after many years, found the beloved cash passing through his fingers once more. The old stock-jobbing instinct, the poetry of the man, developed again suddenly. He did not care for money's worth. His salary was good; and out of it he assisted Algernon to pay part of his lawyer's bills (Algernon having been prosecuted by his church-wardens for lighting seven candles on his communion-table before dark. Algy said it was dark, and the church-wardens' power said it was n't; and "it went against" Algy). Betts did not in the least care about his own money, he he most particularly liked handling that of other people. He knocked up a splendid scheme to

L. Mary's greater than Eton, and it was to extent successful.

There was no difficulty with the Board about it. His influence was high. The more intelligent members of the Board knew perfectly well that he had done well for the charity in helping to get it into the country, and also that his was the arithmetical head among them. He was a poleon, and had earned the right to be envied by armies. And this man would give them

by getting up a bigger thing, in which times should have the old predominance. There was no difficulty with the Board at all, so far. Mr. Brockliss himself, so far as this part of the matter was concerned, behaved himself like a stupid and high-bred lamb, with a great power of

"The spread of a sound education was the things nearest to his heart. He had been thrown against commercial complications; but he had no doubt that perfectly blameless people were sometimes seriously affected by

His general rule in life had been to hold a hand of fellowship to any member of the society pointed at by the finger of scorn. Therefore it was advisable that any member of a society should use his undoubted influence to get a member of his own family, or, to speak more correctly, his son's father-in-law appointed to a post of honor in which," — and then he mazed himself in a labyrinth of grammar, and broke his shins among tangled sentences, leaving the Board with the impression that he was a good-natured old ass. As it did he was. The Board determined to build up the school, and to make it, if possible, the best school in England.

That this was not the job which Betts had in his mind. Silcote accepted all this with perfect composure, when he had once scolded Betts into submission. Betts had dreaded Sir Hugh Brockliss as a great enemy. But, after he had got the last word of the Squire's tongue, he had seen that the devil was not always dumb, he began to see that Silcote himself might turn against the job: for reason if no other, — that Algernon was involved in it. But he was an obstinate man, of the same breed of man who waited at Waterloo till the Prussians came up. He wanted the thing done, and he did it in his own way, — defiant and obstinate.

"You agree with all we have said. Now the question arises about the head master. We must have a first-class man for head master; we must, to make it pay, you know; a first-class man. A Herford scholar, you know, but a man of mark; — a man whose name in an advertisement before leaders will be like the unfolding of a banner. Now you'll have to pay such a man as this. Through the same."

"I suppose we must," said Silcote.

"I suppose you must also. But then I have leekulated every halfpenny, and we haven't got a penny to pay him."

"I ain't going to find the money, if you mean that," said Silcote.

"I don't mean anything of the kind," said Betts. "Taisez, taissez. I have been in a general way knocking round and asking questions."

"Is Kriegsturm your man?"

"No, Kriegsturm ain't. But I find, going into details, that the man we want as head master can't be got under twelve hundred a year. Not the man we want can't. And we must pension the present

old man who calls himself head master, with five hundred a year. And I can't find the money."

"Then you must drop the scheme till you can," said the Squire.

"Why, no," said Betts. "I know a man, up to every requirement, who could do it for seven hundred and fifty."

"Snap him up then."

"I have. Do you care to know his name? It is Arthur Silcote."

"Do you mean that Arthur has lent himself to this job?"

"Yes, I do. And this ain't half of it. As for Arthur, he wants rest, and he will get it here."

"Will he?" said Silcote.

"I told you you had not heard half of the business. You must have ever so many more masters. Now I know of one who would suit exactly. Not a first-class man, but a good man enough, and accustomed to tuition."

"My dear friend, let me have his name, without any more beating about the bush. Do go straight at it."

"Algernon Silcote, my son-in-law."

The Squire stood mute.

"You are a bold man, Betts: but this is too bold. The Brockliss party won't stand it, man. The world won't stand it. I, the chairman of the Board, get my son's father-in-law appointed as treasurer — as treasurer — and immediately appoint one of my sons head master, and another second master! It won't do; I cannot consent. We shall have the *Times* down on us. I admire your audacity, but it won't do."

"Arthur is going to send in his testimonials, and you must give it him. No man within miles of him will apply at such a salary. You can't oppose him. And, if you stand in your eldest son's light, it will be attributed to wrong motives. He is going to send in his testimonials, and, if you give the weight of your name against your own son, worse things may be said of you than if you jobbed him into fifty places. There are those who think him an ill-used man already. But, if you change your passive neglect into open and active hostility, and stand between him and his poor children's bread, you will have worse things said of you than anything the *Times* will over the mere matter of a small job like this. And, lor! it is nothing!"

"Not to you, perhaps," said the Squire, laughing, "but I am not so used to this sort of thing. I suppose it will look a little less disgraceful and preposterous when I get a little more used to it. But about Mr. Silcote. What has he been doing? I thought his church was full."

"That is just where it is, Squire. He can't do without me. I must have him under my own eye; I can't trust him out of my sight. No sooner did I begin to stay here, no sooner was my back turned, than he goes to Oxford, and stays with his old friends. I've seen him tending to it for a long time. He began Lowish enough Church, you know, but all the old college friends he really ever cared for were High Church, and he has come round to 'em at last. I warned him of it. I spoke seriously to him. I pointed out to him the danger and error of such a course; that it led to the still more degrading superstitions of Rome; that his church was not adapted for it, being what you may call of an orthodox style of architecture; that his congregation hated M. B. like poison; and that the thing had never been made to pay commercially. But I

could not make him see it. Not being a religious man yourself, Squire, I hope I give no offence in saying that it is very difficult to make really religious men see things in a commercial point of view."

"O, you could n't, eh?" said the Squire, shaking his great chest with internal laughter at the mental spectacle of Betts trying to argue Algernon out of his religious convictions on commercial grounds. "So he won't listen to you, eh?"

"Not a bit of it," said Betts. "I knew he would make a mess of it if I did n't stay by him. I saw he was getting bent on it; and consequently I knew he'd do it sooner or later; for his name is Silcote, you know, — that's about what his name is. And the last words I said to him were: 'If you find that your mind leads you to it, I said, 'I suppose you must do it. But,' I said, 'let 'em down easy. Preach up to it cautious,' I said. 'If it's the right thing,' I said, 'go in for it; though as a last word it has n't took in the north part of London, and is against my own principles; but, whether it's right or wrong, there is no harm in making it pay in a commercial point of view. Lor' bless you!' I said, 'I have made many things pay in my time, and, if you give me time, I may make this; though no one has yet. Now I am going to your father' (meaning you), 'and, if you are determined, begin preaching up to it cautious.'"

"I hope he followed your advice," said the Squire, laughing more kindly than he had done for thirty years.

"My advice!" said Betts, utterly unconscious of the amusement he was causing. "Is n't he a Silcote? He preached in his surplice the first Sunday I was away. Ah! I'm telling you the bare truth. He turns the chairs towards the altar, and he calls *that* letting 'em down easy. What on earth are you laughing at? I don't see anything to laugh at."

"I won't laugh any more if I can help it; but, dear Betts, has his course been successful? Won't he let his pews better in consequence of this ceremonialism?"

"I tell you that that sort of thing don't suit our Islington folks all of a sudden. They want letting down easy, and he has gone and let 'em down by the run. And he has emptied his church. And he must have this master's place; and, if you get out of it with that, without my coming on you for a couple of hundred pounds to pay his tradesmen and his doctor, you may think yourself lucky."

"But he is a Puseyite, Betts," said Silcote, as soon as he had smothered his internal laughter; "and, according to your own confession, Puseyism don't pay; and our own apology to human decency for the outrageous job in which we are both concerned will be to make it pay. This Algernon Silcote is a marked Puseyite; they have left his church, and the boys have cast squibs and crackers into his area. We shall ruin the whole thing if we take a man half way to Rome into the business."

"And how will you get out of that, I wonder?" thought the Squire as he stood behind Betts, with a more genial light in his eyes than any one could remember to have seen before. "This is fun, and seems to rattle one's heart about pleasantly. How will you, you kindly old rogue, make this thing fit?"

The kindly old rogue was blessed in resource; he had only to bite his finger in silence for less than one minute, when he found himself able to wade

towards his idea through a vague stimulating of commonplaces.

"Why, there's various ways of looking at it, Squire. What's treason in one place is patriotism in another. In a similar way, what is orthodox a cathedral is Puseyism in a church. Artizans has a deal to do with it, and we are going in for the highest style of architecture procurable for us. Close imitation of the old buildings. Reimmediation of your renaissance, tag-rag, and bobbery. bless you, his surplice won't be noticed in our age! Why, we chant the Psalms now, and Algernon will go in for everything short of income. May be safe with him, you know. And there is a consideration for your not opposing Algernon's nomination as master."

"And what is that?" asked Silcote.

"This," said Betts, suddenly and furiously, in a way which strangely startled the Squire: "just cause, if this man Algernon Silcote is kicked out the cold to starve with his children, by — I pitch the whole thing to the Devil, and you know him. If he has to beg, by — I'll beg alongside him. If he has to go to the workhouse, I'll go to the workhouse with him; if he has to stand in a dock, I'll stand alongside of him. He will not take a penny from me. And he see it out with through thick and thin, — through a bit more than you've ever seen. Come! And by — I see it out with him to the end and finish of it. If I don't, may —"

"Hush, my friend, hush!" said Silcote, laying his hand very gently on Mr. Betts's shoulder. "Don't scold and swear. You have scolded yourself into tears during a business conversation. How unbusiness-like. Be quiet; I will do everything you wish for this gentleman. He was my late wife's son, you know. Now that I see what you are, I will let it all to you some day. Not now. Let me not make a fool of him at a time. Now have you got any other officers in your eye, you audacious old schemer? Won't you appoint me shoeblack and request Sir Hugh Brockliss to undertake the office of scavenger?"

Betts laughed. "Well, now it's over, we may as well have a little talk to get it all out of our heads. Officers? Ah, we want a new matron, and had better see to it at the next Board. Old Mrs. Jones is past her work. She will be swallowing her spectacles soon. I've had to advertise without waiting for the Board. You will pension her, of course."

"Of course."

"And Berry? He ought to be pensioned, you know."

"He'll last. How about the matron?"

"One application, which seems likely. Splendid certificates, but belongs to a sisterhood."

"That won't do. We can't have a Roman Catholic woman with a wimple about the place."

"She wears no dress, and, I believe, takes no vows, and she is a Protestant. She is evidently a tip-top person. If you don't object, she ought to be snapped up."

"Is she used to this kind of thing?"

"She has been used to everything pretty near from her testimonials. She was in the Crimea to begin with. The doctors at the Small-pox Hospital at Manchester wrote and asked for her, but the late superintendent writes for me to say that she has set her heart on this. You had best have her."

"She will be better than a Gamp, I suppose. I see no difficulty. Large salary?"

"Lor' bless you, her sort don't take money. She must be decently found, but she mustn't be offered money. That was expressly mentioned."

"We will have her in, my Betts. What is her name?"

"Mrs. Morgan. They call her Sister Mary, but she is to be called Mrs. Morgan if she comes to us."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MRS. MORGAN.

I BELIEVE that Mr. Betts, in his ignorance, actually thought that Arthur's work at St. Mary's would be lighter than that at Balliol. It is impossible that Arthur could have thought so, but he may have thought that some change in the form of his eager activity would amount to a kind of rest; for of rest, consisting of actual quiescence, he was utterly incapable. It was known to but very few, of whom his father was one, that on several occasions he had fainted. The first doctor he had consulted on this alarming symptom had spoken so very gravely of the symptoms that he had found it necessary at last to tell his father, which he did the day before James arrived at Silcote. Another doctor, however, had given a more cheering account; there had been no recurrence of the symptoms; and here he was fairly installed lord and master of the new *régime*.

His buildings were not quite finished, but his boys were due. He had been three days there, and in those three days there had been some fifty waking hours; and, in that time, if Arthur had evolved from his steam-engine brain one scheme for making matters better, he had evolved fifty,—one an hour certainly. He was a little anxious about his appearance; the glass told him that he looked younger than a great many school-boys. He found himself, therefore, uncommonly apt to stand on his dignity this evening; but there was no one to show off on except poor Algy, and he was no use. Any one could bully him.

However, he walked across the moonlit quadrangle to his brother's house. It was a pleasant house, opening out of the cloisters, and looking down on the lake. The children were in bed. He found his brother reading in his handsome crimson-furnished study. He was glad to see his dear old friend so well-housed and comfortable after his troubles; and he said,—

"How do you think you shall like this new life, Algernon?"

"Not at all," was the reply.

This was scarcely encouraging. His brother did not seem inclined for talking. It occurred to him that he might as well go and see how the matron was getting on; and so he went towards the dormitory, where he expected to find her busy. There was a light in one of the sixth-form studies, and he directed his feet that way. "I wonder where she is, and what she is like," he asked himself. "By the by, they say that she is something very superior."

Here she was at last, putting one of the sixth-form boys' studies tidy: a most remarkable-looking woman indeed. As Arthur saw the face, it was the face of a woman who had been beautiful,—a very powerful and resolute face even now. She was quite gray, and wore her hair banded back into a knot behind. Her dress was gray, of a somewhat superior texture, and she wore a long gray shawl, which nearly covered everything, pinned close up

to her throat; hair, shawl, and gown all nearly the same color. She had no ornaments about her except a white cross, which hung at her side; and Arthur, seeing a lady before him, immediately took off his cap, and made his best bow,—all the school-masterism knocked out of him at once. She crossed her arms on her bosom, and bowed reverently; and then they began to talk.

"You seem perfect mistress of your duty, Mrs. Morgan."

"I have been carefully trained to it, and, being naturally clever, I have mastered it."

"You will give great satisfaction, here, I see."

"I suppose I shall, I mean to do so."

This was not said with the slightest approach to flippancy, but there was a tamed and deliberated boldness in her way of speaking, to which Arthur applied in his own mind the epithet "splendid."

"I hope we shall work well together, Mrs. Morgan. I am rather apt to be fidgety and exacting, but I will try not to be so with one so evidently skilled in detail as yourself."

"There is little doubt that we shall work well together, sir. I intend that we should. Your boys are due to-morrow morning. At what time do you think?"

"All hours, Mrs. Morgan. Up to chapel time at nine in the evening."

"Those who come from close by are the first, of course; and those from longer distances the latest?"

"No. I should say rather the reverse. But you cannot tell. I am only judging from Oxford. Can I do anything for you?"

"Nothing; thank you very much. There are one or two matters of detail I wish mended; would it be your place to mention them to the Board, or mine?"

"Yours, certainly."

"I shall have to appear before the Board, then?"

"Of course, if you have any report to make. And now, good night. May I be allowed to say that I have had a pleasant surprise?"

"And I also," she said, with a very pleasant, honest smile. "May I ask one question more. Do you keep the chapel door open?"

"I will be most careful to do so. It was always my intention to do so. By the by, have you found your way there yet?"

"I am never long in doing that," she said. "And now, good night."

She had to light him down some stairs; and, when he saw her last, standing on the top of a flight of steps, the light was strong on her face and hair. What with her gray hair and gray clothes, she seemed, as she bent her head towards him, to be dressed in a radiance of silver. Waking up once or twice, he thought of her in the chapel, and how very little he should like to stand in some dark corner and see her come sliding silently towards him in the moonlight.

But it was not to the chapel or to prayer that she betook herself that night. She had prayed over this matter long enough, and now began to doubt whether she would wish her prayers answered or not. "I have prayed so earnestly that he should not recognize me. And yet, if he does not—"

Up and down, hour after hour, between the two long lines of white beds, went the gray, ghost-like figure, passing from band to band of bright moonlight, which was thrown from the long Gothic windows across the dormitory. Arthur had thought of

her as an awful figure to meet sliding along the midnight aisles of the chapel. Had he seen her now, as she paced up and down, with her silver-gray hair flashing in the moonlight as she passed each window, and her whole figure becoming black as she passed the alternating shadows, he would have thought her more awful still. Up and down nearly all night, with the sleeping world around her. Incapable of prayer now, for she was half wishing that the constant prayer of the last three months might be unanswered. The High Church folks had tamed her wonderfully, and there was no exclamation, no gesticulation. But no system of religion, of which I have heard, has any rule against a woman's walking swiftly up and down all night, with a whole world of loving and longing in her heart, unable for the time to pray, unless it were to pray that her prayers might not be answered.

So for the night. The morrow found her seated in her room, at her duties, directing her maidens, cool, calm, cheerful, business-like, with piles of the boys' linen around her. It was buttons and needles and thread now, and kindly religious talk, and sensible advice to the demurely-clad servants who were assisting her. "A pleasant, kind lady," said the maidens to one another. "A wonder to find a real lady taking such a place as this." Yet, though she was majestic, she was very genial; and not a girl of them all but felt that she was in the presence of a person the like of whom she had never seen before.

She did not talk "goody" to them; nothing of the kind. She inquired about each of them kindly, but not obtrusively, and somehow managed to leave each of them with the impression that religion was the principle to which all others must be deferred, without in the least degree thrusting the idea upon them.

She was absolutely inexorable in details, they noticed. No missing button could escape her eye. Yet she had nothing of the "Tartar" in her, like the old goose, now pensioned, Mother Berry.

"Get the new uniforms out, my dear," she said to the youngest maiden, "and lay them in a row. The boys should begin to arrive soon. At what time do they generally begin to come?" Little thought the demure damsels what a wild expectant woman's heart was raging and beating beneath that solemn gray shawl. They were awed and hushed by her awful, calm solemnity: they little thought of the volcano within. If they had, they would have only wondered. They were maidens, and knew not of the Storgè.

At last the boys began to arrive, or, to say more truly, creep in. For the first arrivals were two feeble little orphans, presentation boys, aged ten and nine, coming to get their uniforms; torn by the inexorable necessity of poverty from their mother; terrified at everything, and coming here for shelter. Her two long arms came from beneath the long gray shawl, until they formed horizontally a cross to her body; and she said, "Come here, my dears, to me." And they looked in her face, and then they crept to her, one under each arm, and were frightened no more.

Then others came, and then more, until her eye got bewildered with their numbers and their varieties, and her ear got confused with the wonderful differences of their voices; she all the time, though doing her duty steadily and mechanically, waiting to hear one voice; which, although it must be changed by now, she thought she would be able to

recognize. The other boys came swarming in, big and little, in all manner of moods, but the voice she longed to hear was dumb to her as yet.

They were in all moods, these boys. Some were low in their minds, almost to being penitents; these were those who were the most inclined to tears. Others were fractious and petulant; of others were those from the very first riotous. All looked at her curiously, as though to see much nonsense she would stand; and finding clew to the answer in her calm, benign face and ure, began an inductive course of experiments, a view of finding out what her temper really was and what stand she was likely to take.

Though they tried her hard, she was perfect calm and good-humored. The bolder spirits began dancing and fighting before her very soon. But she took no notice whatever, only now and then quietly smiled.

The riot got most fast and furious. They went into her room and out of it again. They kept one another in play, and rolled over and over the ground. They put on their clean night-gowns over their clothes, and danced in them, sometimes singly, sometimes in a mad, aimless carnage, sometimes waltzing in pairs, and coming half over together. The demurest and oldest of the maidens protested mildly. "Madam," she said, "you will never be able to manage them if you allow them this liberty." She said, "I will manage them I am not here as a disciplinarian. Are boys not to play? Is the sun not to shine? Besides, girl, I am waiting. Leave them alone, girl."

Waiting, but not much longer. There was a new noise in cloister and corridor, and the burden of it was, "Here's old Sugden."

She could not pretend to stitch now. She folded her hands over her work, and said to herself, in prayer, "God, let it be Thy way." And then she sat and looked at the crowd of young faces and young figures before her, keeping her eyes towards the door.

A glorious lad, with vitality and vigor in every limb, and with youth, health, goodness, ay, and not a little beauty too, in his face, came hurrying. Their eyes met. She sat perfectly calm, praying silently, with her folded hands clasping one another painfully. She saw, that, when his eyes met hers the expression of them changed from rollicking vivacity to wonder, to admiration, to respect. But there was no sign of recognition. Her prayers were answered. Her own son did not know her. It was well.

It was very well, save for one ghastly spasm at the heart, which she did not allow to show in her face. Yes, it was very well.

"Now, Mrs. Morgan," he began, "you must take care to be especially civil to me. I am the oldest boy here, very nearly; and you will follow me when I say that I am a power in the place. Your policy will be to treat me with peculiar consideration and respect, and never on any account report me. You will be particular about that; do you see?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Morgan.

"You see I am so clever, my dear Mrs. Morgan, and of such a very strong will, that nature's less gifted than mine must naturally yield to me. And *physique* goes a long way, you know. About my personal appearance there can only be but one opinion, I believe. Have the kindness to look on me, Mrs. Morgan, which you don't seem inclined to do, and see whether or no I am a beauty."

"And indeed you are," said the mother's heart within her. The boy had meant nothing whatever by what he had been saying. It was all what he would have called "chaff." But when she turned her great kind eyes upon his, and laughed low in answer, he got puzzled, and began to think he had gone too far in some way. How, he could not conceive; for she was not angry.

"You don't mind my nonsense, do you? I forgot you were a lady. I don't mean any harm. The last matron was not a lady, you know."

"I don't mind your nonsense," said she.

"You don't, eh? Very well, then, allow me to give you a little more of it. Permit me to tell you that you don't know your duties as a matron in this establishment. Look at the hay these fellows are making about your room, and you sitting there sewing on buttons. Your duty as matron is to get into a blind wax, to bounce out of your chair, to catch the first boy you come across (as it might be me, you know) by the hair of his head, bang his head against that wall, and clear the room. The other matron always did."

"Then, you think," she said, "that I could not do it except in that way?"

"Not you; you don't know us."

"Do I not? Watch me."

The tall gray figure rose to its full height, and that attracted some. Her voice made them all quiet at once, from curiosity, if from nothing else. It was round, full, powerful, and most wonderfully audible. "My dear boys," she said, "look at me, and listen. I have been used to order, and accustomed to have it when I command it. There has been disorder enough, and I must have order now. You hear? Go, and go quickly. Sugden stay; the rest go."

They went like lambs, and James was left alone with his mother.

"There, you see," she said to him when they were gone; "that seems wonderful to you, does it not? If one could deal with all the ghastly disorder in this world as easily as I have with that little riot, why then, boy, the world would the sooner be ready for the second coming of Christ. For they may set the time of his coming by stars and by numbers, but he will never come again, boy, until we, by tears and by blood, by life-long struggles for the good, through ridicule and poverty and self-denial, have made this world fit for him. Then he will come, and we shall see him."

This was so utterly unlike anything which James had heard in sermons, that he was a little awed. He had a dim idea that it was strangely expressed; but also that it meant something. He had to speak, and he said, —

"You are not angry with me?"

She, with her whole heart yearning for one kiss, angry with him! If she could only make any pretext for getting near him, touching him, feeling his breath, putting her hand over his hair! How subtle and quick the Storgè makes a mere hen; do you think Mrs. Morgan-Sugden was to be beaten? Not she.

"Your collar is all frayed, Sugden," she said.

"It is an old shirt," said he.

"I shall not have your clean shirt ready before to-morrow," she said; "and you can't go about that figure. Come here, and I will set it right."

"Shall I leave it out?"

"No; come and have it done. I have too much to think about."

So she got him near her, and in doing her work would lay her hand sometimes on his shoulder. Close to her; yet the one sweet kiss, for which her mother's soul thirsted, as far away as ever. The work was done; one more little artifice was left her before he must go. She put her hand over and through his short curls, and said, "You must have your hair cut, Sugden; I don't allow long hair."

"It was cut a fortnight ago, ma'am," urged James.

"Then it must be cut again to-morrow," she answered. "Look here," she said, drawing one gently out; "this lock is much too long. Now off, boy; I have much to do."

CHAPTER XXVII.

SILCOTE ESCAPES FROM THE REGION OF BOREDOM. —

It got to be terribly dull for the Squire at Silcotes that autumn.

Betts was of course installed in his new lodgings at St. Mary's, doing his new duties at the school, fussing, examining into everything, directing, advising those above him in authority, and bullying his inferiors like fifty Bettises. Arthur was there likewise, hard at it. The Princess was *supposed* to be at Silcote, but was mostly in London or elsewhere; her only public appearances being at the Twyford Station, where she periodically was seen by admiring country neighbors, exquisitely dressed, gorgeously bejewelled, taking her ticket and dropping her change. The Squire was reduced to his old company. No one was left to him but Anne. It was awfully dull.

Why? He had got on like this for twenty years, and never found it exactly dull. He had made out his time pretty well. He shot a little, and rode a great deal, when he found himself getting dull in old times. He tried these remedies now, but they would not do. He shot better than ever, and never swore at the keeper, but engaged him in conversation. He rode his splendid horses hard and far, and, one day, sneaked so near to the meet that he got into the ruck of men, and went away like a bird; going hard and well, cutting down most of the field. The hunt did not one half of them know his person; but at the first check it got whispered abroad that the man who rode so well on that great bay was no other than that *bête noire*, Dark Squire Silcote. They killed the fox after a most tremendous run, and the Squire was in with the very few at the death, finish, or what they call it. The master rode up to him, and spoke a few cheery neighborly words to him (the Squire was a fifty-pound subscriber), and Silcote found himself chattering eagerly and pleasantly to the master about the run, with an almost boyish animation. But, as he rode home through the darkness, he was the Dark Squire again, — darker than ever; and Silcotes was duller than ever that night. All the profusion, all the really well-ordered beauty of the place, had got hateful to him.

And why? Firstly, because the memory of a great wrong was beginning to die out of the man's soul, — of a wrong so incorceivably and unutterably great that, when I have to tell you of it, as I shall have to do immediately, I see that I must touch with the lightest pencil in my case, — because I say the memory of that wrong was getting weakened by kind old Time; who, if he does let die

twoep aside old loves, at all events does the same for old hatreds and wrongs. Secondly, because the man had been aroused from his selfish stupid torpor by new ideas and new interests; and this fact, acting and reacting with the mere effect of time, had made his old, tedious, selfish life disgusting to him.

That a man of such intense moral and physical vitality should have slept so long may seem surprising to any one who had never seen his face. But Nature told his story plainly enough to those who would read. The deep-sunk eyes, so close together, told her story about the man, retiring as they did under the heavy eyebrows, as though they would shrink into the very soul. The gait of the man, slouching and suspicious, in spite of his physical activity, — the head always thrust forward, — told the very same story. The story of a man who had the deepest hatred of publicity, — the deepest jealousy of any fellow-man seeing for one moment into his soul. And yet, at the bar, whilst he was there, the man was distinguished for an audacity and a disrespect of persons and formulas which amounted to bad taste.

Was this unnatural? Surely not. His defiant impudence was an effort always, an unnatural effort; and he will confess that, in making that effort, he always said far more than he meant. A man who cannot debate without getting fierce had better leave debate alone. There was no more harm in the Squire than this. He, although with nearly first-rate talents, was suspicious and jealous beyond most Englishmen; and to this man there had happened a hideous and inconceivable wrong. And the man had shut himself up, his wealth allowing him to do so, and growled his soul out to his sister and his servants and his bloodhounds. That is all.

But this course of procedure would not do any longer at all. The man, such as he was, was roused and wakened. Arthur began it by leading him into this St. Mary's Hospital business, which had involved Betts. And now he found that he could not do without his Betts. Betts's intense realism was at first a rather pleasant foil for his own suspicious sentimentalism; but Betts had now become a necessity, as ice is to an American. Betts and he had fought out, and carried through, what he thought (with intense pleasure, I am bound to say) a most scandalous job. And there was Betts down at the school, getting all the fun, and he, the Squire, left alone with Anne at Silcote. It was terribly dull.

And Anne. Well, and again Anne. Mrs. Sugden, that remarkable peasant woman, had told him once that he was making a rod for his own back by his spoiling that girl; and the words of that very remarkable woman seemed to be coming true. Anne was what our American brethren call a "limb." He knew that perfectly well, and had seen that every governess would not stand her; and so, at great expense, he had got the services of a placid, even-tempered lady, possessed of every virtue and every accomplishment. He had told this lady that she would please to consider that her present engagement meant a provision for life. The good lady was very poor, — in fact, penniless, — and very humble. But this autumn morning she had come, and, after dissolving herself into tears, had given notice that she would wish to leave that day three months.

Silcote would not accept her warning at all. He told her that his word was passed to provide for her,

and put her on her honor to stay. After which he sent for Anne.

"What is this matter between you and Miss Heathton, Anne?" was his mild remonstrance; he was afraid of her.

"What is the meaning of the fire-works on the fifth of November?" was the young lady's answer. "I don't know. But they always come. I don't know exactly how it began. She went on explaining me with her old-fashioned drill-sergeant notions until I could n't stand it, and broke out. And, if my memory serves me, I was very rude and very vulgar. But I am sick of this place and about it. I will go and make it up with her, if you like. What are you going to do to-day? Can you take me for a ride?"

"I am going to ride across country to St. Mary's," said Silcote.

"Do let me come. I am so utterly weary here. I do hate this place so!"

This was to be his return, then!

"You have everything which the mind of man could possibly desire here."

"I am so bitterly lonely. I have not a soul to speak to," pouted Anne. "I am sick of the horses and the dogs, and the peacocks and pigs, and the footmen and grooms. I wish I had been a boy, and gone to school. I wish I had been stolen by some one and made to climb up chimneys. I saw a crow yesterday, and he was laughing at something that split his sides. I never have anything to laugh at. Come, do take me. Get my pony ready. Let me sleep with Dora."

He gave his consent, and she was soon by his side in a gray riding-habit and low-crowned hat. She was very beautiful, there was no doubt about that; but on a very small scale. They were splendidly mounted, and rode fast, having far to go. Anne was half wild with joy and high spirits. She would sometimes lay her pretty little gloved hand on the Squire's great arm, and squeeze her thumb into him. She was clever and agreeable, and she made herself very charming to him. It was the most delightful ride either of them had ever had — long remembered.

Late in the afternoon they left the enclosure and came on the wild, silent heath. At sunset they pulled their horses on the edge of a roll in the moor, just above St. Mary's College, and looked over into the deep hollow beneath. The lake was a great crimson pool, with all the fantastic school-buildings reflected in it, with the dark woodlands rising sheer behind. Lights were beginning to shine from the windows, sending long trails of reflection into the darkening water; while the hum of three hundred voices arose pleasantly on the night air, and lost itself in the solitude around.

Anne drew a breath of deep delight. "This is something like a place," she said.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

—AND, AFTER AN EXCURSION TO DOUBTING CASTLE,—

THEIR men led the horses away to the head-master's stables, and Silcote, wickedly and for fear of sending Anne perfectly alone, and with no directions, to find Algernon's lodgings, held his way towards Arthur's; looking back from time to time to see how Anne got on among the crowd of boys and those tender mercies he had so mischievously

committed her. She was not in the least embarrassed, but, drawing the skirt of her riding-habit over her left arm, she requested one of the nearest of them to go and find Mr. Sugden, and then stood perfectly still, with her whip-arm drooped at her side, not a little pleased with the astounding effect which her beauty produced. The sensation reached its climax when James appeared, and, coolly accosting her as "Anne," marched off this splendid creature to the third master's lodgings; and, having seen her in, went across the quadrangle whistling, with his hands in his pockets, perfectly unconcerned.

The Squire, entering by the principal way, found himself in the comfortable bright corridor, swarming with well-fed, well-clad youngsters. His heart warmed at the thought that no inconsiderable part of the good he saw around him was *his* doing. One of the masters whom he did not know, an amiable, gray-headed man, was standing near him, and the Squire, in the warmth of his heart, went up to him and introduced himself.

"Your servant, sir. I am happy to have the honor of your acquaintance. I hope you find everything here quite comfortable, sir. We have hunted high and low for talent, and, by Jove, sir, we intend to induce talent to remain with us. A word to me at any time, sir, on any point, will meet with attention."

"Thank you very much," said the wondering Algy. "I have the honor to—"

"Not at all," said the Squire, with a polite wave of the hand.

This was very disconcerting, but Algy came at it again.

"I was about to observe that I had not the happiness. If you will allow me—"

"Certainly, certainly, certainly," said the Squire, with great good-humor. "By all means."

Algy could not help wishing that this burly old gentleman in gray breeches, butcher's boots, and a white hat, would not be quite so polite. He had to bring it out so awkwardly.

"That, in point of fact, I did not know to whom I had the honor of speaking."

"Surely not, surely not! Ha, ha! how could you? And I going on all the time supposing you could know a man you had never seen in your life. Capital! I am Silcote of Silcotes, my dear sir, where I hope to see you some of these days."

Algernon drew suddenly back and grew pale. He had not, till this last announcement came suddenly upon him, the slightest idea that this burly old country squire in gray was his terrible old father. But he had to speak.

"My name also, sir, is the same as yours. It was the necessity of my children which drove me to this place, sir; not my own. I had intended to keep out of your way, but fate has ordered it otherwise. I only ask you to believe that our *rencontre* is as purely accidental on my part as it is on yours, and to withdraw."

Silcote was not the less thrown off his balance. He had approved (or consented to) Algernon's appointment, and had got into some corner of his brain the notion that sometimes, at the further end of a corridor, he might see a figure which avoided him. He had never wished to speak to his son, or to find him. He had been speaking to him, and had found him,—had found in his son a man as gray as himself, but more bent under the pressure of the horrible secret which had ruined both their lives.

The corridor was light, and the noisy stream of

boyhood was passing and repassing. The son would have gone quietly away, but the father made a gesture to detain him. Algernon had the children to think of. The two men stood face to face under a lamp, but not looking at one another. Silcote's eyes were on the ground,—he in deep thought, and Algernon calmly watching him.

An inexorable sort of figure, and a very inexorably-shaped head, was all that he saw before the Squire raised his face honestly and calmly to his, and said,—

"Let us talk together."

"Will you follow me?"

"Certainly. I cruelly let the curse descend on you when you were seventeen. I repent. I did wrong. It was a shamefully vindictive action. Since then I have heard nothing but good of you. No one has heard any good of me, God help me! You have borne this bitter curse better than I; and yet, from what I have heard of you from every mouth, you are a man who would feel it more. And you are as gray as I am. Go on, and let us talk together."

They passed from the noise of the boys and the lights of the corridors, through the dark cloisters, towards Algernon's house. As the dark-gowned figure of Algernon passed on from shadow to shadow before Silcote on their way, ghastly doubts, followed by the faint ghost of a new-born joy, very dim and afar off as yet, passed through his soul. When they were in Algernon's well-lit study together, the Dark Squire threw himself into a chair, and Algernon began the conversation, standing erect before the fire.

"This interview, sir, is deeply painful to both of us. There is no doubt of that. It was not of my seeking. I anticipate that you will say that I had no business to marry at all. But I married, as I thought, an heiress, and so no blame can be given me for that. Mr. Betts has doubtless explained all that to you. I am a broken and ruined man, sir; but I ask nothing for myself; only I will kneel and cringe to you for the sake of my unhappy children."

Silcote raised himself from his chair, slowly and solemnly, and confronted him. "Come to the light, sir, and let me see your mother's eyes once more. I know they are there, and I must see them once again before the great coming darkness, even if the sight of them kills me."

Algernon came close to the lamp, and looked at him steadily and quietly. Silcote looked at him fixedly for nearly a minute, and then said, "Hah!" like a sigh, and dropped back in his chair. Algernon stood steadily where he was.

After a few moments Silcote spoke again.

"Boy, how old are you?"

"Forty-one."

"And gray. Grayier than I. But it has not killed you yet."

"Not yet, sir."

"Odd. Look at your *physique*, and look at mine. And you knowing it ever since you were seventeen! You ought to be dead, you know."

"I ought never to have been born, sir."

"And you have known it for nineteen years, and not died under it."

"My religion has supported me, sir."

"We will leave that alone. You gray-headed boy, look at me again."

Algernon did so.

"I can bear those eyes now; I thought at—~~at~~ they would have maddened me. Boy, is th—

wild chance that we have both been abused and deceived?"

"That is entirely your business, sir: the responsibility lies with you. If we are both deceived, I have been deceived through you."

"That is true again," said Silcote; "that is true. I can't stand much talk on this question. Only I ask for one thing. Don't say anything about this interview in a certain quarter."

"In which quarter, sir?"

"Confound the man," said the Squire, testily; "is there more than one quarter? The head-master's quarter, — Arthur's quarter. Don't tell him of this, man. We have been half maddened, you and I, by this business; but I hope we have both brains enough left to know a prig and a bully when we see one; and Arthur is both. But, mind you, I love Arthur better than all the world besides, and have made him my heir. He tells you everything, I believe. How is his health?"

"His health is perfect, sir."

"You know nothing, I see. But the doctors say that those fainting fits are nothing. Do you ever hear from that vagabond villain, Tom?"

"If you mean your son Thomas, now rising in the Austrian army, I hear from him very often, sir."

"You may let me know about him on a future occasion. Now, sir, if you will do me the kindness to send for the boy Sugden, I think our interview may end. Will you shake hands?"

"Certainly, sir."

"That shake was for the sake of your children; take this pat on the shoulder for your own good self. You are a good man, sir; you are a good man. Now quick, — the boy Sugden."

CHAPTER XXIX.

— GETS INTO THE REGION OF UNUTTERABLE ASTONISHMENT —

THE Squire had completely changed his manner by the time that the boy Sugden appeared. The reaction from his terrible talk with Algernon had made him sarcastic and peculiar. Our old friend James appeared before him, looking horribly guilty, but very charming and handsome; and the Squire, sitting up in his chair, began on him snarling.

"You are a most charming boy; you are a nice piece of goods; you will do, you will. Mr. Silcote, keep your eye on this boy: he'll do. What do you think of yourself, sir? Hey?"

James might have said that he thought a great deal of himself, but he didn't. He only stood before the chairman, Squire Silcote, shifting from one leg to the other, looking, as the Squire afterwards told Betts, so confoundedly handsome and amiable that it was a wonder he did not throw the poker at him.

"Silence, hey! Is this obstinacy or stupidity? Is this letter yours, sir?"

"It is certainly mine, sir," said James, quietly.

"A cool proposition, that I should send you to Italy at my own expense; and, if possible, my nephew Reginald also! On what grounds, may I most humbly ask, do you base this astounding demand?"

"It is no demand, sir," said James, looking frankly and slyly at him, for he had got to understand him; "it is only a proposition. It is generally considered to be not only a duty, but a privilege, of the rich to patronize and assist genius."

"Certainly," said Silcote. "I allow all that. Would you be so condescending as to show me your genius? You don't happen to have it about you do you? If you will meet me so far as to take your genius out of your pocket and hand it to me for inspection, I'll begin to think about patronizing it. No more of it, sir. I'll think over it when I have seen your drawings. Come with me, in Good night, Mr. Silcote."

So the Squire and James went away together. "Boy," he said, as he crossed the quadrangle, "I will think of this Italian scheme of yours now fully. I don't think I shall let you go. I will examine your drawings as an amateur, and get them examined by more competent men. Unless this dictum is 'First-rate' I shall not consent. An artist of necessity dissociates himself from all ties of — any kind whatever — and I don't see my way to it. Now I want to see this new matron, lately superintendent, or whatever she calls herself. Take me to her. What do the boys say about her?"

"She is strict, but very kind; we are all very fond of her. I have had a sitting from her."

"Indeed, my young Weigall. Did you find her a study worthy of your genius?"

"She has a magnificent head, and her get-up is simply superb. She is worthy of a better pen than ever mine will be."

"How sweetly modest! This must be the self-depreciation of a true genius. Is this her room! Pray announce me."

James, knocking at her door, was told to enter in a kindly quiet voice which attracted the Squire's attention. They passed in together. Silcote saw before him a gray-headed woman, dressed in gray, with a long gray shawl, with her head turned away from him, bending over baskets of linen which she was sorting. She attracted his attention at once, and he began, "I beg your pardon, madam —" when she turned and looked at him.

Silcote was transfixed with unutterable astonishment. He burst out, "Why, what the —!" when she suddenly raised her right hand, and with her left pointed to the boy beside him. Silcote understood in a moment, as he put it to himself mentally, "The cub has not recognized her, then." He changed his manner at once. "Madam," he said, "I have come, as chairman, to have a talk with you on various matters. Are you at leisure?"

"I am at leisure, sir; at least, if you will allow me to go on with my work. When the hands are idle, the memory gets busy. You have found that yourself, sir, I do not doubt."

The Squire swung himself round towards James, and, standing squarer and broader than ever before, pointed his finger at him, and said, —

"Go, and shut the door after you."

Which things James did.

"Now, my dear Mrs. Sugden," said he, pulling up a chair, and sitting down in front of her, "would you be kind enough to let me know the meaning of this?"

"Certainly. First of all, how did you call me just now?"

"I called you Mrs. Sugden."

"That is not my name. It was, and is still, that of my half-brother, who passed for my husband when I lived in your little cottage at Beechwood; but it is not mine."

"Your half-brother?" said Silcote. "Was not Sugden your husband, then?"

"No, only half-brother. His mother was not the

as mine. Our common father, a twenty-acre holder in Devonshire, married twice. The first of his first wife, of my brother's mother, was a stone; the name of his second wife, my mother, was Lee."

"Then how shall I call you? Mrs. Morgan?"

"Not at all. A mere *nomme de guerre*, which I assumed when they objected to the title I bore at Peter's, 'Sister Mary.' Nothing more than that."

"Then perhaps, madam, to facilitate conversation, I would put me in possession of your style and name."

"I am Mrs. Thomas Silcote, your unworthy, but faithful daughter-in-law," she said, very quietly.

The Squire fell back in his chair. "Don't regard me, my dear madam; I have the constitution of a horse. If I had not, I should have been in Bedlam the grave years ago. Let us have it out, madam. I thought there were Silcotes enough cumbering the face of the earth. There don't happen to be any more of you, I suppose?"

"There is James, you know," said Mrs. Thomas Silcote, smiling. "He makes another. I don't think there are any more."

"Quite so," said Silcote. "James. I begin to reflect myself. James, then, is my lawful grandson?"

"Most certainly. Do you desire proofs?"

"Not if you assert it. You yourself are a standing proof of every proposition that comes out of my mouth."

"I was a laborer's daughter," said Mrs. Thomas. "A twenty-acre freeholder is a laborer, is he not?"

"I don't believe a word of it," said Silcote.

"I thought you were bound to believe everything said, a minute ago?"

"Don't fence with me. It is not fair. You utterly ruin my nerves, and then begin what these poor boys here call 'chaffing.' Will you explain to me how all this came about?"

"Not to-night."

"You really must in part. How on earth did you come here?"

"Merely by answering an advertisement."

"Does Betts know nothing?"

"Not a word. It is all between you and me. And it must remain there."

"How was it that the boy did not recognize you?"

"Time, time, time!"

Silcote sat perfectly silent. "Time works wonders," he said, at last, "as we used to write in our copy-books, before all this miserable mistake called life began. You wanted to see him, I suppose, and you risked his recognizing you?"

"See him!" said Mrs. Silcote. "I wanted to touch him, I wanted to kiss him; but I cannot do that. Do you remember, one day in your garden, pointing out to me that it would be a drawback to the boy if his low parentage was known?"

"I do. God forgive me if I did wrong."

"You did right: even speaking from what you knew then. I know you, Silcote, as a good and kind man, though you have tried hard to sell yourself to the Evil One. And so I tell you this: that I have doubts, in my utter ignorance, whether the world would take my marriage to be a legal one; and, therefore, I have remained unknown to the boy."

"Where, and how, were you married?"

"In Scotland." And she told him the particulars.

"Bless the woman!" he exclaimed. "You are as much my daughter-in-law as if you had been married in St. George's, Hanover Square, with eighteen bridesmaids. I wish I had known this. Once more, will you tell me the whole story?"

"Not to-night."

"There is no reason against your letting the boy know who you are."

"Let it be, — let it be. The father is outlawed, and the mother's claim cannot be quite proved. It would be a disadvantage to the boy. And hear me, you Dark Squire, with your bloodhounds. The boy has got to love me again, with a new, fresh love, overlying the mere old love which lives in his memory. He has been here painting my face, and the new love showed itself in his eyes a hundred times."

"Was there no recognition?"

"A dim stirring of memory only, which made him more strangely beautiful than ever. Once or twice there was such a fixed stare in his glorious eyes, that I thought I was betrayed. But I was not. It was only the old love of memory wedding itself to the new love of respect and admiration. Would you be loved better than that?"

"Confound the woman!" said the Squire to himself, and then sat quite silent, — she going on mending shirts.

At last he said: "The boy wants to go to Italy and study art. I have had bother enough with Italy, but I won't stand in his way. I recognize him as my grandson, and I love the boy. But is there any promise in these drawings of his? We must not make a fool of the lad. I have seen nothing of his as yet."

Mrs. Silcote rose, and brought from a bureau a small canvas with a head, painted in oils, upon it. It was the likeness of herself which James had done. She said, —

"Will that do?"

"Do!" said Silcote, "I should think it would. There is genius in every line of it."

"So I thought, thinking at the same time that I might be blinded by my love. Let him go, Silcote. Did you ever know what it was to love, Silcote? — not to love with the old love and the new love with which my boy and I love one another; but to love blindly and foolishly, from an instinct more powerful than reason? I loved so once, and believed myself loved still more deeply in return; and one fine day I found that I had never been loved at all, and had only been tricked and deceived by words sweet as angels', falselier than devils'. I found that out one day, Silcote, and my heart withered utterly up within me. And I was desperate and mad, and only saved from the river by a gentle brother, who believed me lost, — in one sense of the word. And he and I went back to the fields and the fallows, and fought nature for bread together, as we had been used to do when we were children together, and when mine was only a child's beauty."

A very long silence, during which she sat as calm as Memnon.

When she found her voice again, she went on.

"Do you begin to understand me? Are you capable of understanding the case of one who would have given up everything in this world, ay, and God forgive me if I blaspheme, — would have given up all hopes in the next, for the love of one being, and then found that that love never existed

at all,—that she had been a dupe and a fool from the first, and that, even while his hand was in her hair, he was laughing at her? I went through this, and did not die. Could you dare to warrant the same for yourself?"

A very long pause here. Buttons stitched on shirts, and shirts dexterously folded and placed away, Silcote sitting with his hand before his eyes the whole time. At last he spoke.

"You speak of my son Thomas, whom I loved once. Do you love him still?"

"I cannot say," she answered. "Do you?"

"And I cannot say, either," replied Silcote.

"He is your son," she urged.

"And he is the father of yours," he replied.

"You have the quickness of your family in answer," she said. "Leave this question."

"You have told me part of your story, and I will not ask for details to-night. You ask me if I know what it is to awake from a dream of love, and find that that love never existed. I do! May I tell you my story? I have gone through all that you speak of, and am still alive. Men with my frame and my brain don't die, or go mad. But I warn you solemnly, that, if you allow me to tell you my story, you must prepare your nerves. It is so ghastly, so inconceivable, so unutterably horrible, that I can only hope that the telling of it to you will not kill me."

"You have been abused, Squire. And may I ask, have you never told it before? The High Church people, among whom I have been lately, and who have done me good,—although I don't go with them, I will allow that,—urge confession. It is capable of any amount of abuse, this confession; but, looking at it in the light of merely a confidential communication of a puzzling evil, it generally does good. You have, with your jealous reticence, kept some great evil to yourself for many years, I fear. Why have you never told it before?"

"Why?—Temper, I suppose. I seem like the Ancient Mariner. I can't tell my story to any one whose face does not invite me; and your face was the first one which ever did invite me.

*'The body of my sister's son
Stood by me, knee to knee;
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said naught to me.'*

"I think that is hardly the verse which you wished to quote. But now, Silcote, let me hear this story of yours."

And so Silcote told his story.

CHAPTER XXX.

—AND THEN, HAVING MADE CONFESSION, BUT GETTING NO ABSOLUTION—

"I WAS, my dear Mrs. Sugden, an ambitious, handsome young fellow,—very popular; with an intention of enjoying life, and in every way fitted for enjoying it. I was sole heir to a very large fortune; and, besides that, came from a family of attorneys,—another fortune. No part of my scheme was idleness or luxury. I believed myself to have (nay, I had) considerable talent, not a mean share of wit, and a ready tongue; and I determined—don't laugh at a shipwrecked man—to follow my career as a barrister until I sat upon the bench. My family connection started me very quickly in a fine practice; but, bless you, I could have made my fortune without *them*. Ask any of my contemporaries.

I am only telling you the plain truth, I assure you. Who am I that I should boast.

"I suppose that at twenty-five I was one of the most fortunate men that ever lived. With my talents and knowledge of law, I would have booked myself for six or seven thousand a year by my practice, at forty. I loved my profession intensely: was a lawyer in my very blood, and all that is asked of me was to go on and make a noble fortune by the pursuit I loved best in the whole world. And I must marry, too; and a young lady, beautiful, well born, rich, and highly educated, was ready to marry me. And she had ninety thousand pounds of her own.

"Did I love her or her money? No, I loved her, my dear madam, ever since she was a child. And she loved me at one time. Look at me."

Mrs. Thomas Silcote looked at him very steadily indeed."

"Do I look mad?"

"No," she said very quietly; you look perfectly sane."

"Hah!" said Silcote. "And yet I sit here and tell you as a solemn truth, that I *know* that at one time she did love me."

"I have no doubt she did. You had better go on," said Mrs. Thomas Silcote.

"I loved her when she was a child; more deeply yet when I was courting her; still more deeply as a bride; until my whole soul merged into hers as wife. There never was a woman loved as this woman was by me."

"Well?"

"My sister Mary, whom you know as the Princess, had been a great deal in Italy, principally at Venice, and a great deal also in Vienna; for, next to Italian life, she loved the free and easy life of South Germany. My wife had a son, Alphonse, now a master in this very college, and was a long time in recovering her health afterwards. The doctors strongly recommended change of air and of scene.

"At this conjunction of circumstances, my sister came back to England from Italy and Austria (she was always travelling between the two), and, finding my wife in ill health, proposed to take her to Florence to spend the winter. I was loath to part with my darling, still more loath to let her go with my foolish sister. But the doctors were all for it, and old Miss Raylock (you know her) was going also, and so I consented. It was term time, and I could not follow them for six weeks. I let her go, against my better judgment.

"For I knew my sister well. She is one of the most foolish and silly women that ever walked the earth. And she is very untruthful withal; but probably her most remarkable quality is her perfectly donkeyish obstinacy. Like most weak and foolish women, she has a love of mystery and of mysterious power, and she had got herself, before this, mixed up in an infinity of Austro-Italian plots, having no idea of their merits, but getting herself made a fool of alternately by both parties. I had argued with her on this matter often, but you might as well have argued with the pump. She believed herself trusted by both parties, whereas the fact was that she was merely used as a disseminator of false intelligence.

"When term was over, I followed them to Italy. The state of things which I found there was deeply displeasing to me. I found a coterie of English living in a free and easy manner in one another's

; the leading members of which were my sister Raylock, a certain Sir Godfrey Mallory, my wife. My wife and Miss Raylock seemed the only people who were living in the least up to the English standard of propriety, as it was in those days. As for my sister, she had ded in surrounding the whole party with all political scum of Europe, as it seemed to me. I saw such a parcel of cut-throat villains, before since, as were gathered every evening in my house: nay, not only in my sister's house, but in my wife's, — that is, my own. I won't how they dared assemble there, and excluded a descent of police immediately. There were two people about my sister, however, to whom I had a stronger objection than to any other two. One was a man at that time acting as her *domo*, a German, called Kriegsthum; the other was my late brother-in-law, the Prince of Castelnovo.

How they were allowed to talk the rank sedition they did was a puzzle to me. I am, like most Englishmen, perfectly liberal, rather seditious about English politics, but they seemed to me to be going far too far. I found the truth out though, one day when I had retired from their intolerable jar and was smoking my cigar at a *café*. A very pleasant and quiet young man drew his chair up to mine, and entered into conversation. I took great fancy to the man, and we exchanged names when we parted. What the deuce was it. A Roman name, I remember. Colonna? — Orsini? — but a Roman name."

Not Frangipanni?"

The same. How strange!"

He is our new Italian teacher: he comes down here a week by rail if he can get a class. One of the best men, that is all. The ghosts are rising, Silcote."

So it seems. Well, this man and I entered into conversation, and he told me the history of the state of society up at my sister's villa. It was closely watched by the police for political purposes, the Dionysius's Ear of the police. The people assembled there were either spies or fools, with few exceptions.

I asked him for those two exceptions, and the answer was frank and gentleman-like with me. The names he named were, strange to say, the very names to whom I had taken such a great dislike — the Prince of Castelnovo, and that very queer German Kriegsthum.

"He went on in French, 'I put my liberty in your hands, Monsieur. Why? I cannot say. But I am a patriot, and those two men are faithful patriots. For me I never go to Miladi Silcote's house. I am on my good behavior. I do not wish to be a spy. I receive the Prince, and also Kriegsthum, at my own, where my beautiful little wife, so a patriot, entertains. But go to Miladi Silcote's, no. To Miss Raylock's, but little now. Their patriotism is advanced, but they are indiscreet. Sir Godfrey Mallory also is indiscreet in my opinion. My wife does not receive Sir Godfrey. I do not allow my wife to receive him!'

"Daughter-in-law, that was the first bite of the serpent. I knew that my wife had had one proposal before mine, and that the proposer had been Sir Godfrey Mallory. I knew that."

"And also that she had refused him," said Mrs. Thomas Silcote, cheerily.

"Certainly. But here he was again, and they

were living so very fast and loose. All Leicester Square round them — and — and — I can't go on." "You must go on to the end," said Mrs. Thomas Silcote. "Now?"

"I sulked with her," went on Silcote, in a low voice. "Not in words about that man; though I was jealous, I did not dare to do that. Besides, I could not. I suppose I must tell, but you must hold your tongue lest I should do you a mischief. I took her home, but my sister and her precious major-domo Kriegsthum came too. And Sir Godfrey Mallory followed us. And I sulked with her all the time: though I loved her — O woman! woman! you can't dream of my intense devoted love for that wife of mine!"

There was a long pause. He could not go on, and she would not speak.

"We were never the same to one another after this. I loved her as deeply as ever, but the devil had come between us, and would not go. I thought she had been indiscreet, and could not forget it. I sulked with her, and was persistently hard with her. If I begin thinking of the beautiful quiet little ways and actions by which she tried to win me back, I shall go out of my mind at last, after all these years. When you have heard all, you will think me a madman for solemnly declaring this: that even now, after all is over, I would give all my expectations on this side of the grave, — ay, and on the other also, — to have her back even as she was at the very last. I may have been unkind to her, God forgive me; but no man ever so wholly gave up his soul to a woman, as I did to her, until that fatal night at Exeter."

"Your mind is diseased, Silcote," said Mrs. Thomas. "You have been abused. My instinct tells me so."

"I guessed at the same thing to-night, when I saw her son; but listen. My theory always has been, till lately, that I tired out her patience, — that I turned her into a fiend by my own temper. But I had proofs. I struck Sir Godfrey Mallory (for he and my sister had followed me there to Exeter again, two years or more after my suspicions had begun), and then sat down to my work. The last proof came next morning, but I went into court as gay as ever to defend a sailor boy for murder. And, when the excitement of it was over, I turned into the man I am now and ever shall be. Can you conceive this? A love so deep, so wild, so strong, so jealous as mine, for one who is still, after all, — ay, hear me there, — dearer to me than all life? Can you conceive this, and hear what follows?"

"What proofs had you? Proofs against your wife? Against Sir Godfrey Mallory?"

His face was livid as he spoke, but he found words to utter the terrible secret.

"Worse than that. I had a letter telling me where to look for poison; and I looked and found it. But I never told her what I knew. I took her back to Italy, and she died there in a year. She never knew it. I was as mute as a stone to her. I was never unkind to her; but I never spoke to her; and she tried every beautiful little winning way of hers, — each one of which now, when memory is aroused, scorches my heart like fire, — to win me back. And I was cold stone to her. And she died, and her last look at me was one of love and forgiveness, and puzzled wonder at our estrangement. And memory of it all was dying out under the influence of time, and I thought I was forgetting all about it, until to-night I saw her son, and knew

that I loved her better than ever. So now, instead of oblivion, there comes a newborn remorse. Do you want more?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Thomas Silcote, boldly. "Where is this letter which condemned her. Have you got it?"

"Do not go too far with me. I keep it in a box in my bedroom, and every night a devil comes and dances on that box, and I watch him. Leave me alone, woman; I may get dangerous."

"Not you. Is this all you have to tell me?"

"Enough, surely, I should think."

The tall, gray figure rose on him in furious wrath and anger. "Then this, sir, is the miserable and ridiculous lie, sir, with which you have been maddening yourself for thirty years! Have you believed this for all that time, and not died? Shame on you! shame, Silcote! Is it on such grounds as these that you have killed a most unhappy and ill-used lady, by your wicked jealousy and suspicion? Listen to me, sir. You are getting old, and your life may be too short for the work; but don't dare to die, don't dare to face the judgment until every word of this wicked lie is refuted; and this poor lady's memory is avenged? Don't argue with me. It is a falsehood, sir, from beginning to end. Do you not see it now?"

"If it is," said Silcote, "and I begin to believe so, what room is there for me on the earth, or in heaven, or elsewhere?"

"Right it, and ask the question afterwards. Go."

Silcote never went near Arthur's house that night. A solitary poacher, in Bramshill Park, lurking in one of the northern glens a little after midnight, heard a sound different from the fitful sighing of the night-wind in the fir-trees, and, before he had time to make out that it was a horse's feet brushing swiftly through the heather, saw a horseman pass him at full speed, and hold away southeast, and believed ever afterwards that he had seen a ghost. The grooms at Silcotes were knocked up at half past one, amidst the baying of the bloodhounds, and found their master in the yard, looking stranger and "darker" than ever. But he apologized very gently to them for the trouble he had given them so late at night, and said that his return had been quite unforeseen. James's friend, the young servant, coming sleepily down to answer the kicking at one of the back doors, made by the groom, and believing his master to be miles away, was sulkily facetious when he opened it, and then was stricken to stone at finding himself face to face with the "Dark Squire." But the Dark Squire was very, very gentle, and the young man sitting up wearily, lest his inexorable master might want something before he went to bed, had to stop up until morning.

For the Squire, with eyebrows knitted deeper than ever, and with his hand close clasped before him, walked up and down the old hall till broad day.

CHAPTER XXXI.

— GOES HOME, AND LEAVES ARTHUR TO ENJOY HIS SHARE OF ASTONISHMENT.

THE boys had been a little time back, and Arthur had sorted them into new classes, and had been tremendously busy. The general opinion of the boys was, that they did n't like him: which was extremely natural. It was part of his plan (for he had achieved the art of school-mastering from sec-

ond-hand, and had even bought Arnold's "Life and Letters") to watch and study diligently the character of each boy most carefully; and which was to be treated with geniality and with severity, and so forth. Poor Don! so clever as he could be, wanting only one thing—genius; and believing that he could be genial—could attract a boy's confidence by line and tone. The boys did not like him, even in these early times, and got cordially to hate him afterwards, in spite of his inexorable justice, generally a quality which boys appreciate greatly. Arthur's genius was Birmingham, and the boys knew it. Allen was often unjust; and sometimes mislaid his temper now; Betts was at furious war with them all; every conceivable subject; but they loved him and Algernon, and they never could endure him. But I must go back to the third day after the meeting.

He was tired with his work, and he felt need of some relaxation. Music was his favorite relaxation, and he determined to have some music. The first of them on the very first Sunday was not to his taste, and he thought that he could find some one who could please him better than the organist. He went on his cap and went across to his brother's lodgings.

On opening his brother's study door, which opened out of the cloisters, he only found Miss Dora seated as you please, quite alone, sewing before a fire.

"Good evening, uncle," she said. A sentence which is hardly worth the paper it is written on. A sentence so unmeaning that an editor might justly object to its being "set up"; but worth writing down, if one could only give the emphasis. At such events, there was an emphasis about it somewhere. I should say not far from the first *e* in *evening*, which made Arthur say to himself that he was very saucy and forward girl.

But he could override and put down, by absolute disregard, all forms of sauciness. He merely asked her contemptuously, —

"Fetch Miss Lee to me, will you? Tell her I want her."

"I doubt if she would come to you, now," said Dora, coolly. "Besides, it is too late to start London."

"Is she not here? Is she in London?"

"I can't say," said Dora, going on with her work. "She dates her letters to me from her house in Canon Street, Mayfair: rather too near the Fifth Street, Mews Chapel, to suit my Protestantism, which she lived further away from it. Did you go there, uncle?"

"Farm Street, Mews Chapel? No."

"You should. Splendid mass, uncle. One of the best masses you can hear in London. Miss Lee took me there in the summer, while I was staying with her; it was really as fine as that sort of thing can be. Thanks to your instructions in music, Miss Lee was thoroughly able to appreciate it. I was afraid she will go to Rome, though: in fact, I thought she had gone, but found she had been stopped at rather more than three quarters of the way, by some extremely High Church people. Still, I wish she did not live quite so handy to Farm Street, where she was in hopes you were going to marry her," concluded this *demoiselle terrible*; "you might have been on our side of the border."

"Don't talk nonsense, Dora. I will not permit it."

Miss Herbert might possibly, after some of

cientious study, say "Certainly not," as demure-ly Dora said it. For poor me, I have only to sit it down:

Has Miss Lee left you, and got a situation in our Street, Mayfair?" asked Arthur.

She has left us, certainly. But I am inclined to doubt whether, now she has come into her property, she would take another situation as gover-

ness. Then it is enough to keep her? I heard she has come in for a small legacy, but I have neither the power nor inclination for details."

It is certainly enough to keep her," said Dora, lightly and sarcastically; "that is to say, if she lets it go as far as it ought. And it *may* be led."

Tell me all about it, Dora. I am getting inter-

ested. I thought you were interested in her before. It is great pity that she has got into the hands of the ultra High Church people. It was my father's fault, partly, I will allow. But you had great influence over her once, uncle; why did you not keep it?

I fear greatly that all her fortune, present and prospective, will get ultimately into the hands of the Papists."

Her fortune? Has she got a fortune? I have heard nothing. I thought she was with-

out. "I don't know what you call a fortune," said Dora maliciously. "I will tell you all I know. There is a vast number of Lees in Devonshire, and the whole of all the Lees has died without a male heir, has bequeathed his great property to the two female heirs in his line; one of whom is Miss Lee."

"Good heavens!" said Arthur.

The other happens strangely to be a woman I remember perfectly well, — James's mother."

Who is 'James,' in the name of goodness?" asked Arthur.

Never mind now. I thought you knew him. His memory is short, uncle."

Never mind my memory. Go on."

Certainly. They have found Miss Lee, and she has got her money; but they can't find James's mother. As far as we can make out, if they don't find Mrs. Sugden, the whole of it will go to Miss Lee. I know nothing about the terms of the will; as far as I can gather, if Mrs. Sugden does not turn up, Miss Lee, instead of having four thousand a year, will have eight. It is a good deal of money, isn't it, uncle?"

Four thousand a year! The girl is mad."

Miss Lee, you mean. I think she is quite mad herself; as mad as a hatter or a March hare, to get into the hands of those extreme High Church people. Mind, I know nothing about the law of the case, uncle;

Miss Lee has got her four thousand a year, and as much as me in the very jaws of Popery."

Next morning Arthur, with a dour face, set to work which he had laid out for himself, — that of dividing the lower classes in order. An unhappy ingenious and poetical boy freely construed the quaint *abuntque siccas machinæ carinas* by "The iron machines drag down the sick people to the evening harbor."

Arthur lost his temper, and banged the boy on the head with a Valpy's Horace. Miss Lee, four thousand a year, and on the verge of ruin! Bless the boy, it's a wonder he had not killed him.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE PRINCESS DEPARTS SOUTHWARD.

SILCOTE, in the astonishment produced by meeting with Algernon so suddenly, and by finding his own daughter-in-law in that remarkable woman who had been living so long close to his park-gates, rode back to Silcotes from St. Mary's in a state of extreme confusion. His confusion lasted through the night, which he spent in walking up and down the hall; and as night grew into morning the confusion remained, and had superadded to it an ever-growing terror.

He had told Mrs. Thomas Silcote the truth. "The memory of it was dying out until to-night I saw her son, and knew that I loved her better than ever, so now, instead of oblivion, there comes a new-born remorse."

This was all true. It was easily hinted at to Algernon in the sudden shock of their accidental and awkward meeting; it was easily spoken of in his tragical passionate talk with his newly-found daughter-in-law. The talk about it was easy; but the plain, hard result, now that he was alone in the solitary house, was terrible, and the terror grew as he paced up and down.

If he *had* been abused; if his evil suspicious temper *had*, after all, killed the gentlest, kindest woman who ever lived; if all those sweet little arts of hers which she had used upon him, to bring him back to her, had not been the wiles of a would-be murderess, but the gentle trusting arts of a tender wife, only wondering at the cause of his estrangement; — what room was there left for him on earth, or elsewhere? Once or twice on the previous day he had felt a kind of new joy at the hope that his first wife's innocence might be proved: now, when his daughter-in-law had said out roundly, and even furiously, that she believed him mistaken, he began to see the frightful consequences to himself if his dead wife's character were ever cleared up. There was no place for him anywhere. Those gentle, wondering, inquiring eyes of his murdered wife would haunt him to the grave, and beyond it.

His second wife, the mother of Thomas, Arthur, and Evelyn, had been always a mere cipher to him. They had never cared much for one another. Silcote was not a man who could love twice, and she was a woman who was absolutely incapable of loving once. She had borne him children, and, having done that, had died: and the bill for her monument was £187 10s. 8d., — probably the most noticeable fact in her history. A fat, foolish woman, not even gifted with a temper; whom even her own children vilipended. She thought once, and thought always, that she had done a fine thing in marrying Silcote; and indeed he was very kind to her. *Requiescat*. Her existence had been calmly lymphatic, and her memory always dim: the sort of woman who required a very expressive tombstone to keep her within human memory at all. Now to the villagers she existed no longer, except through her tombstone. She was to them represented by nearly two hundred pounds' worth of granite. They had seldom seen her. She had been nothing to them, but they were proud of her, because her tomb was one of the few sights of the place. She had been little more to Silcote himself at any time, and now such memory as he had of her was lost and obscured in the memory of his first wife.

"Have you got that letter?" the woman had asked. And he had answered that it was in a box

in his bedroom, and that a devil came and danced on it every night. He had not looked into that box for years, and it was up stairs in his bedroom even now. There were many letters in that box, the letter among others. At one time he nearly gained courage to go to his room and burn the box, but his courage failed. The little devil which always danced on that box in the dark waking hours of the night would be dancing now, fiercely and triumphantly.

He wanted to believe her innocence, and he wanted to believe her guilt. If she was guilty, all the beautiful old recollections of the wife as she was, at least at one time, were the delusions of an exceptionally-wicked devil. If she was innocent, he was himself a devil for whom there was no ascertained place. Action and reaction, tearing the miserable man's soul to pieces, went on through the night: at one time he determined to move heaven and earth to prove her guilty, at another time an old long-forgotten spring of tenderness would gush up and mount to his heart, but never to his eyes. Hysterical tears, which sometimes give relief, were impossible to a man of his iron constitution; prayer, from long desuetude, had become impossible also.

Those who could have helped him were far away. His beloved Arthur, prig and *doctrinaire*, as he called him, was a sensible man and a Christian, and could have done something for him. Algy, whom he considered as half a Romanist, could have helped him too. Betts,—why Betts would have been much better than nobody; Betts, with his realism, would have torn this ghastly web of soul-exercuating self-examination to pieces in a moment, and they could have had up a magnum of the Château Margaux, and finished with a *soluntur risu tabula*. Even that strange gray woman, his daughter-in-law, who had said such bitter fierce words to him that night,—she would have been better than utter isolation. Her sharp caustic bitter words had not stung deeply at first, but the burn was beginning to tingle now; and in his present mood he hated her, because he feared she was right. Yet he would sooner have fought her point by point than be left to madden his soul alone in the dark hall, amidst all his accumulated luxury.

Then the horrid wheel of thought went round again. *Where* was she, innocent or guilty? *Could* the soul be mortal? If immortal, was there any possibility of a meeting? and so on. At one time dreading to meet her again; at another wishing to do so, to learn the truth; at another longing, with his whole soul, to see her once again beyond the grave, that, even if the worst were true, they might explain all things to one another, and after that go hand in hand through the great eternity together.

They might well, these agricultural boors, call him Dark Squire Silcote. Their simple superstitious tact seldom gives a bad nickname to any man. They were right enough here. Silcote was in utterly Egyptian darkness this night. Nothing left him just now, to connect him with other men, but a blind old tenderness for a woman. And he had believed for twenty years that that woman had wished to murder him. Evil and good were fighting for him; and, when evil for a time got the upper hand, Silcote's mood was darker than ever, and the memory of his wife was put aside to spare himself the remorse which would be his fate were the terrible story of her guilt proved to be a lie.

He was in the blackest mood of all at daydawn,

when the mere physical habit of years made him leave the hall and go towards his bath-room. He had believed himself to be alone in the house with the servants; till, coming into a long gallery, he saw approaching him his sister the Princess, beautifully dressed in silk, seal-skin, and sable, worth the buyers of old clothes a thousand pounds as it stood.

Her first look was of surprise, her second one unutterable terror. For before her, in the light of the morning, stood her brother, first planted in her path. She looked on that stern figure, that gray head, and those black eyebrows, for one instant, and then she began to whimper, and dropped her muff.

"Pick that thing up—it cost a hundred guineas I know—and come here."

She made a feeble effort to reach towards the muff, but it was a failure. Her beautiful hands, the quivering of which could be seen at the perfectly-fitting French gloves, were first spread abroad in an attitude of terror, and then brought together in an attitude of prayer. She went on on her knees, and said, "Brother! Brother! do not murder me. I will swear I never knew it till this day, and that I am innocent."

"Get up, and don't be a fool. What do you know about this business? And where are you going?"

"I know nothing about any business at all. But if you look *farouche* at me like that, you will kill me. He has been extorting money from me again. Mercy, brother, mercy!"

The Squire's purpose was utterly changed, and his explanation indefinitely postponed. *Kriegsthum* was bullying the Princess for money, and the Squire thought it must be his son Thomas. His better nature prevailed. He said,—

"He has no right to serve you like this. Is he in debt again?"

"He is making a fortune; and making it out of me. Brother, I will explain everything."

"No need, my poor sister. How much does he want?"

"Two hundred pounds. And I have so many calls upon me. Brother, I will tell you everything—"

"Let be. I have had enough for one night. I will give you a check if you will come to my study. Tell the rascal to mind what he is about. I can forgive seventy times seven, but not seven hundred thousand times seven. I shall not go to bed. Tell the servants to bring the letters to me here in the study. Now kiss me, sister, and go your ways."

"Good by, brother."

"And good by also, sister. When will you be back?"

"I am not certain."

"Shall I wait dinner?"

"No; I think not."

"Don't be such a fool, sister."

"In what way?"

"Generally."

"I am as God made me," said the poor Princess, and went her ways. It was a long time before she darkened the doors of Silcote's again.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SQUIRE SEES THAT HE HAS ONCE MORE OVER-REACHED HIMSELF.

THERE were no letters of consequence by the morning post, and Silcote went about his farm that

He missed Anne very much, and wished for pany of any sort. The horrible night he had ed was still horrible in recollection, even in ul daylight. He had always had a sneaking of his reason giving way under solitude and ation, and he was full of that terror now. He getting hardly plagued for his sins, and was in or lest he should lose his reason in the plaguing. God's mercy he had no idea; in God's venance he believed, like a devil, and trembled.

He was alone in his great house: utterly alone. bloodhounds, the most evil of all his evil fancies, e baying in their yard. His maids and footmen e swarming about the house, from butler to vard's-room boy; from housekeeper to still-room id, putting all things in their old English order or nothing. His grooms were merry over their utiful horses, exchanging jokes and hopes in ich he had no part.

His bailiff and his laborers were abroad over his n, taking far more interest in the sewing of the d, and the breaking of the clay, from which they ld get no profit, than did the Squire himself. d he — the lord and master of it all, the main- ing of the whole great useless machine — stood erly alone: without one soul to speak to him on al terms; and with a bitter terror gnawing at heart; an ageing man, with a wasted life behind a, a newly-arisen memory threatening to kill a, and only hoping for death as an extinction of sciousness. Not a creature near him. He was : one who could sit with his grooms, — old habit s too strong for that. Yet, if one of them could ly have exchanged words with him, he would d been glad. But he went into the stable-yard, d their voices were hushed at once. The smallest ble-boy had only to glance at the Squire, to see at he was in his darkest mood: they went on with ir work carefully, and in silence. Little did y dream that the darkest hour is just before the wn. Silcote would have given a hundred guineas a kind word from any one of them. But as he d sowed so he must reap. He had sown temper, d he reaped silence and solitude.

He was alone in the house. At least so he ought, in his selfish forgetfulness. But early in e afternoon he was standing in the flower-garden, hind a Deodara, when he noticed that there was difficulty with one of the window doors which ened from the breakfast-room into the garden. me one was trying to undo it from the inside, ith a view to coming out. At first the window as pushed at the top and pulled at the bottom, en it was pulled at the top and pushed at the otom. Then the person inside discovered that it as bolted, and withdrew the bolt: after which the indow came open by the run, and there was some nd of accident inside, which sounded as though me one had fallen over two or three chairs, and ad likewise broken something in the nature of ina. Lastly, Silcote, watching the now open win- ow with great curiosity, saw come out of it a mild tle lady in galoches, and recognized Anne's gover- ess, Miss Heathton.

He looked forward with great eagerness to this hance of getting away from himself; and advanced wards her with alacrity and politeness. She ould have fled, had there been time, but he was o near to her when she saw him, and she had to trike her colors, and submit.

"A fine day, Miss Heathton," said the Squire.

"A very fine day indeed, sir."

It was nothing of the kind, being a perfect brute of a November day; but it did to open the conver- sation.

"I have relieved you of your pupil for a few days, Miss Heathton: you shall have a little peace."

"I am glad my dear pupil should have some change. I should have little difficulty with her, I think, if she saw more society."

"It shall be as you wish. You have travelled?"

"All over Europe."

"Should you consider it as a part of our contract to travel with Anne?"

"I will do so with the deepest pleasure."

"Good. I will set about it. I have a carriage which I think will do. If I find it won't I will buy a new one. And now where would you like to go? What do you say to the Holy Land, now, to begin with? You are a very religious woman, it would just suit you."

"My dear sir! so sudden. You take away my breath."

"Find it again. What do you say to the Nile, or Norway, or Jan Mayen's Land, or the Cape of Good Hope, or Boulogne?"

"I should think Boulogne to begin with, sir."

"So I should think also. How perfectly your ideas chime with mine? What a sensible woman you must be! Yes, I would begin at Boulogne, or Calais if you prefer, and work through France into Italy. You might get to Rome for the Holy Week, but don't keep the girl in Rome after Easter. Come north as the spring gets on."

"Your wishes shall be attended to in every respect, sir. May I make a suggestion?"

"Madam, you are here to make suggestions, and I to attend to them."

"Then may I remark that the Holy Week at Rome is a somewhat dangerous trial for a young and impulsive girl like Anne, who has been kept so closely secluded from the world?"

"Dangerous! I have been at it and never saw any danger. Except the illumination of the dome, and that is done by convicts, and, by the by, is not in the Holy Week at all."

"She is very impetuous; and, according to your desire, I have only given her the most ordinary religious education. I think there is a danger of her being dangerously attracted by the Romish ceremonial."

"I have forgotten all about these things. I understand you to mean that she would be likely to turn Papist?"

"That is certainly my meaning. She has never seen any form of ceremonialism in religion yet, and will be very likely, as far as I dare judge from her very eager nature, to be dangerously attracted by the externals of the lowest form of Christianity; the Romish."

"There spoke the governess, — I beg pardon; I want to be civil to you, and induce you to be my companion for the day. But other girls go to Rome and don't turn Romanist; why should she?"

"She has not been treated as girls usually are. She has been mewed up here too long (forgive my boldness). Anne is a girl of great mental activity, and of great determination. The only outlet she has ever had for that mental activity has been leading me the life of a dog. She is not amiable, Mr. Silcote. She is far from amiable," (Miss Heathton lost her very little temper, a very little bit, just here.) "I never thought that I should have gained courage to tell you this, but you are different to-day

from what I have ever seen you before. And Anne is not amiable, Mr. Silcote. Far from it."

Miss Heathton had found out, like a true woman, that Silcote was in a bullyable mood, and nailed her little colors to her weak little mast.

"Well," growled Silcote, "I have heard all that before. She is a Turk. I will allow that: but what makes you think that she will turn Papist?"

"I think, sir, that it is extremely probable with a girl like her, who has been kept here without any sphere whatever for her great mental activity; not to mention her obstinacy and ill temper: that such a girl will find in the first decent form of religion, which she comes across, an outlet for her great—"

"Obstinacy and ill-temper," growled out Silcote.

"Well, and a good job too. Let the girl turn Papist if she pleases: as long as she don't bring the priests into the house. Let her turn Papist. According to your own Protestant profession, it would give her an outlet for her obstinacy and ill-temper, which I am sure is very much wanted. Let her turn Papist; it is no sort of consequence to me."

Miss Heathton paused for a few moments before she had her *ultimatum* ready, then, with as much dignity as can be shown by a lady in galoches, she drew herself up, and presented it.

"Mr. Silcote, I beg to renew the warning I gave you a few days ago,—as far as my memory will serve me, the day before yesterday. I cannot any longer remain in the establishment of a gentleman who has proved that all forms of religion are a matter of utter indifference to him. Of morality I say nothing."

"Who on earth asked you?" said the exasperated Silcote. "Am I to keep my head in an everlasting beehive for the rest of my life? Is there to be no peace for me at all? Arthur bullies me, Anne bullies me, Betts bullies me, Algernon turns his pale face and gray head upon me, and says that if things have gone wrong it is entirely my fault, and that I am answerable for everything. The woman Sugden turns on me and worries me like a cat-a-mountain, and now my very granddaughter's governess has taken up the tune, and gives me warning because she won't say anything on the 'score of morality.' Did I understand you aright, madam?"

"My words were, sir, that I would say nothing on the score of morality. My complaint is that of indifference in religion. Indifference in religion becomes, in extreme cases, a moral fault. When I alluded to morality, I merely alluded to that."

"Very well. Then we will keep the girl from turning Papist. Now let us be agreeable and comfortable. I really want to consult you about many things."

"Agreeable I will try to be, sir; comfortable, never. I am glad that I have the courage to say thus much thus early before matters have gone any further."

Silcote bowed, and committed himself no further. He said afterwards to Arthur and Algernon, "Why, that very old governess of Anne's thought once that I was going to propose to her, and choked me off. I seem to have come into the world with two left hands, two left legs, and somebody else's tongue. I am a man of strong will, and of great obstinacy, yet I never did, never do, and never shall do, the thing I mean."

By degrees Silcote and Anne's governess got into the ordinary channel of conversation. They were commonplace and polite at first. Miss Heathton went to the grave with the impression that Silcote

had proposed to her, and that she had refused him. Miss Raylock ranks her among Spartan women of the strength of this story, or rather on Miss Heathton's perfectly honest development of the little incident mentioned above. Our business, however, with their subsequent conversation, which in allance for human patience, shall be abridged. With our readers' interest in our eyes, pick it up this point. Miss Heathton said, "This extreme almost fierce opposition to Romanism appears to arise from two causes. The first, sir, the innate political pretensions of the Pope, which we prevent any English Catholic from being a true hearty subject to a Protestant sovereign: and secondly, the inordinate pretension of the priests to dominion in our domestic arrangements. Such are, in my judgment can guide me, the insuperable objections to that particular form of Christianity. Those two objections are, in my humble judgment insuperable."

"I agree with you, madam, most entirely. We were subsidized—I hope the term don't offend you—for the purpose of expressing exactly that opinion. You have done it in the most admirable manner. Bah! I am vexed and teased, and I get rude. Your opinion, madam, is Philistine, is it true. Could not we talk of something else?"

Not if Miss Heathton could help it. "I was you so truly say, sir, subsidized, as expressing a *juste milieu* of modern liberal thought. When I cease to do so, my engagement with you is at an end. I am at a loss to know why the expression 'Philistine'—which I confess I do not understand—should be applied to any utterance of mine. There can be nothing in it in any way offensive to an unprotected lady, or a man of the known courtesy of Mr. Silcote could never have uttered it."

"Offensive! My dear madam! Why, I am Philistine myself. God bless you, I have wrecked my whole life on Philistine principles."

"I am delighted to hear that, sir," said the governess. "I was certain that our principles were the same. Now Miss Lee is a case in point."

"In point of what?" asked Silcote,—"Philistine?"

"A case in point of what we were talking about said Miss Heathton.

"What were we talking about?"

"Romanism, you know, and all that."

"Exactly," said Silcote. "And Miss Lee?"

"Why, Miss Lee is a case in point."

"And who is Miss Lee, and what point does it illustrate?"

"Do you mean to say you have not heard?"

"I have heard you, madam, for the last half hour but what you are talking about I am at a loss to understand. Try a fact after such a mass of generalizations, if it is only for a change. Give us Miss Lee as a fact, and let us generalize from her. We really must start somewhere; let us start at Miss Lee. She is really the first tangible point we have come across in our conversation. I never heard of her, but she seems a fact. And do you know that you and I want facts sadly? Words won't do for us. If you find yourself equal to answering for the personality and existence of this Miss Lee, let us hear her and discuss her. Give me a fact, that's a good soul. I cannot always live on negations. Is *anything*? If so, let me hear of her. Arthur is not a saint; Algy is not a sinner; Anne is not an angel; St. Mary's is not an entire success; Tom is not the rogue I thought him. Another one, who is dead

turn out to be utterly different from what I thought her. Not in my heart, not in my heart, m., — never, never, there. Go on with your about this Miss Lee, madam. Let me hear something real and undoubted, will you?"

They were all alone now among the pleached all the end of the flower-garden, and Miss Heathcote was frightened at his passion, not in the least by the cause of it. Women generally submit, in time, to the stronger and less-often roused men of men, and she submitted, trembling.

Miss Lee, sir, is a friend of mine. Her whole life was spent in an utter blank of ignorance. She was scarcely educated, left utterly unprovided and of course did what all poor girls in her situation do. Being perfectly respectable, perfectly ignorant, and utterly unused to teaching, she of course took a position, which probably requires a more fully careful training, and certainly involves more responsibility, than any other. She took a position as governess."

"Don't be hard on her, madam," said Silcote. "She was rash, and had probably not calculated on the awful weight of moral responsibility which attaches to the post. We do not find such women as Miss Heathcote every day."

Miss Heathcote bowed a condescending little bow to the compliment, but, of course, did not waste time in confirming such an obvious truism. "The revelation which Miss Lee ever had of a higher nature came through a very highly educated young man."

"Bless the parsons!" said the Squire.

"And," said Miss Heathcote, with dignity, "I much regret to say that I cannot approve of the conduct of your priest, however much I may admire him personally."

"You admire him? Handsome?"

"Singularity. He educated her, he introduced her to higher things; to history, not merely secular, I regret to say, ecclesiastical. He improved her with wretched music, and in doing that took her away from her legitimate sphere at the piano, taught her to play the harmonium, and introduced her to such dances as pieces as the 'Stabat Mater.' He also introduced her to church needlework and church decorations, and ultimately took her to Wells Street."

"These priests are always at it, you know. But what the dickens did they go to Wells Street for?" "He took her to Wells Street, sir, to sap and undermine her Church principles, sir. But he did more than that. He gave rise to hopes in her, sir, which, if he ever meant to fulfil, he has not fulfilled as yet, and, indeed, is little likely to do."

"O, the villain! And what did he do, then?"

"Left her utterly without guidance, sir. The young man in whose family she was governess took her the same benighted courses; but he did not go on enough for her. The young priest of whom I speak, himself a renegade to the High Church party, the prize of religious peace, of a soul-destroying, conscience-killing life of active good works and mental religion, before her, and then left her, out guidance, to follow that perfectly worthless path, whithersoever it might lead her, alone. She did him once, but I doubt if she loves him any more. He deserted her as no gentleman would; he deserted her, because she was poor, and could not help his ambition; but the poison he first put in her veins has acted better than he would wish, if he knew all. She is rich beyond telling now, and he is

only a sad memory of a faithless and unworthy man to her. Meantime she, in her ignorance, in her blindness, in her disappointed passion, has gone forward on the road which he first pointed out to her; towards irresponsibility, towards what the poor fool considers peace, towards Rome. She is nearly there now."

"You tell your story well. Go on. I knew of these things once."

"I feel it, but I think I tell it but poorly. The poor girl thinks that, by accepting tradition she can relieve herself of the responsibility of thinking for herself; that she can, by placing her conscience in the hands of a half-educated priest, bury the talent of intellect and free thought and free will with which God has largely gifted her. I would sooner have seen her dead. I would sooner that her soul stood bare before God to-morrow than see this. And he did it. He introduced her to the means, but, like a craven, would not guide her to the end."

"There is something in the air of this place," said Silcote, "which makes every one talk himself into a passion. We shut ourselves up too much here. There is nothing so bad for the temper as shutting yourself up. There was Anne yesterday broke out. I have hardly behaved like a gentleman in all points of this afternoon's conversation, for I have exhibited passion. Now you yourself, gentlest and mildest of women, have lost your temper over a priest. (I never had any temper at their disposal, therefore I could not lose it.) That outrageous glorious daughter in — I should say daughter of democracy, Mrs. Sugden, must have got her powers of blowing up during her residence on this secluded and desolate hill of Boisey. Let us hope that the Thames which winds round its base will not catch fire. Now, madam?"

"You recall me, sir. You mentioned Mrs. Sugden, just now, I think?"

"Half a minute ago."

"Do you know where she is?"

"No," said the Squire, most promptly. ("I don't, you know," he made it out to himself; "she may be in the buttery or the dormitory, or for the matter of that anywhere"; but added, with more devotion than usual, "God forgive me for a lie.")

"Mrs. Sugden," pursued the governess, "is Miss Lee's cousin, and co-heiress with her in this vast fortune. She is supposed to be dead, and if she is not found in a certain time, as I am given to understand, Miss Lee takes the whole of the fortune, eight thousand a year, and Miss Lee is either at Rome or near it."

"The deuce! I will save four thousand a year if need be; but perhaps she is better as she is. Meanwhile you have interested me about this Miss Lee. Can't we save her four thousand a year from the priests? There is Arthur, a handsome young fellow to snatch a brand from the burning. Let us see what he can do. He can manage me at times; he ought to be able to manage her."

"Sir, you have misconceived me."

"I cannot see how, madam."

"This young priest of whom I have spoken is your son Arthur. Miss Lee, as I presumed you remembered, was your eldest son Algernon's governess: voilà tout."

"Do you mean to tell me that this Miss Lee, with the four thousand a year, is that two-penny girl I choked — I mean warned — Arthur from?"

"Certainly, sir."

"He must have been mad."

"Only prudent, my dear sir," said Miss Heathton. "He did not know about the four thousand a year. Another word before we go in, about Mrs. Sugden. She has a very high opinion of your family, and evidently knows something of it. It was she who wrote to her cousin, urging on her the acceptance of the situation as governess in your eldest son's house."

And so Miss Heathton took her galoches inside, and left the Squire in somewhat of a rage.

He had a fancy later in the evening to go gently to the school-room, and see if he could get Miss Heathton to gossip again. Gently opening the door, he found that there was an old-fashioned four-fold screen in front of it, put there to keep Miss Heathton's legs from the draught. He slyly looked round it, and there were Miss Heathton and, moreover, Miss Raylock, with tea and toast, sitting over the fire and baking their insteps. He was no listener, but he could not help hearing Miss Raylock say: "My dear, Silcote knows where Mrs. Sugden is well enough. That little expression of his shows it. And, if her husband is dead, and if I know human nature, he will marry her. Silcote would sell his soul for another four thousand a year."

"Confound that old woman," he said to himself. "She is the chorus to our family tragedy. And she is so confoundedly clever that she always goes beyond the mark, and her moral reflections on the state of affairs are never right. I wish she would study the Greek model, and not commit herself too far in advance of facts. And old Raylock would marry me to-morrow if I asked her. And I should hang myself that day se'nnight."

And then again over his solitary dinner he thought: "That noble wife of my most rascally son Tom, what is to be done with her? Not a soul knows where she is except myself, and possibly her half-brother. She is well off, and in her way happy. I sha'n't tell her about this fortune of hers. Tom would spend it all. I must go to town and see this will. I shall not disturb her yet; certainly not till I send the boy to Italy. He had better be kicked about: I ought to have been kicked about more. Suppose that I can keep her there in ignorance for a time, and send the boy to Italy, and so wait? Tom must not have her money."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AND WE HEAR ALL ABOUT MRS. THOMAS.

The next morning Silcote received a very large and very long letter from Mrs. Thomas Silcote, which without any comment we subjoin, with the Squire's remarks.

"I promised to tell you all about myself, and I feel I can do so better by letter than *vis à voce*.

"My father was a very small freehold farmer in Devonshire. His farm was so small that both he and my half-brother worked on it like common hinds, and as soon as I was old enough I helped.

"I got some schooling, I think about four days in the week, on the average, working on the others. I was a shabby, poor drudge on working days, but, after the habit of West country girls, I made up for it on Sundays. I was gay enough then, and I think I had a good taste in dress. My father was the second time a widower, and, until I was sixteen, we three (my father, my half-brother, and myself) lived happily together. My father was a good and kind

man. My love for and gratitude to my brother are not to be expressed in words. I shall see him soon.

"I had few pleasures, my father and brother none at all. We lived a hard and dull life, in spite of the beauty of the country, and the exquisite softness of the climate. But periodically used to come two or three days together of real unalloyed pleasure. Dressed in my best clothes I used to walk to Exeter, eighteen miles away, and stay with an old aunt who kept a very small shop in the lower part of the town, in a narrow street which, with its bustle and life, was a paradise to me after our solitary life on the farm among the folding monotonous hills.

"On one of these expeditions, I was going slowly along the broad highway, wanting still six miles from the city, when I heard behind me a clatter of horses' hoofs and a jingling of steel, and turning saw three dragoons, who clanked swiftly past, and disappeared round a turn in the road under a deep red cliff. I had not done admiring them when I saw the main body who followed them, and had to use as good care of myself as I could.

"They were not going much beyond a foot pace, and I drew against a gate to let them pass; and there were about two hundred, they were some time, during which I was exposed to every kind of jocular salutation. I wonder whether officers can prevent their men from insulting every woman they meet while marching; I suppose not. However they passed in time, and I, girl-like, hurried on after them, to see as much of them as possible.

"I was still so near them that I could hear the clank of their accoutrements and the tumult of their voices; and I was so absorbed in my girlish admiration of their gallantry and magnificence as they wound along between the dull red cliffs and the sparkling river, that I was unconscious that a solitary horseman was beside me until he spoke. A bold, clear, and yet very gentle voice said close to my ear, 'I hope the men have not been rude to you. We recruit, you know, from the wildest class in the community, but not from the lowest. These men are rough and free in their salutations, yet they are soldiers, and I do not think there is one of them who would not protect you from real men as boldly and as freely as I would myself.'

"As his sweet delusive voice fell on my ear, I turned and saw him, the man himself, may God forgive him, for the first time. A beautiful youth, all scarlet and gold and steel, bending from his saddle, and looking gently and respectfully into my eyes.

"He was a lovely youth I guess:
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he."

"Well, my fate has not been Ruth's, though but for God's mercy it might have been. Could I help looking frankly back into those frank young eyes (for he was frank and true then, Squire), and thanking him for his courtesy and solicitude in my bold free way?

"'They are wild and free,' he went on, 'but they are not all evil. You are not one who should believe so, at all events, for they mainly come from your own class. And when they get an officer who will sympathize with them and trust them, they will follow him through fire and smoke and the horror of death, seeing not the terrors of mutilation or extinction (for they are all irreligious) before them, but only trying for an infinitesimal share of the great glory of some noble deed of arms, which alters history and leaves a mark on the face of time. These roughly-trained boors (forgive me, for you belong to them

r, though the women in that class are so much rior to the men) fight, not for personal honor, for the honor of the number of their regiment.

Officers get rewarded; I, as one of them, I'd be rewarded, if I led some two hundred of a to a ghastly death under creditable circumstances. I, as an officer, get my reward in personal tige, either to myself living, or to my memory; these poor sheep fight for the honor of a number.

Could you or I fight to the bitter end for the or of the number 140, which is the number of this ment? I think not. These men deserve re-t."

When the Squire had read so far, he laid down letter, and walked up and down the room. ow clever this woman is! That is Tom, you w, his own self. What a special pleader he old have made." Then he resumed:—

I cannot tell what I answered; but it was all r, and I loved him. He was the most beautiful the most splendidly-dressed creature I had ever e. He spoke of new and noble things to me in a e I had never heard before, and in a tone of con- sential respect, which flattered me exceedingly. new what other women of my class know, but I l no fear of him. I met his eyes boldly and fear- ly, and said,—

"I respect them for their valor, but we peasants like, as a rule, having soldiers in our houses. ey sell themselves to die, and prepare themselves death by making themselves unfit to meet God": we were the very words I used to him. They re strange ones for an uneducated peasant girl, u will say. But we were Wesleyan."

("They would have been strange, madam," was cote's commentary, "in any one but yourself. it you are so utterly passing strange, that I wonder u confined yourself to such a very ordinary remark. u were an uneducated Wesleyan at one time? ell! I am glad you confined yourself to that.")

"He, Thomas, went on. 'You have walked far,' said. 'I was sitting in the inn at Crediton, ooking out of the window, when you came up, dus- even then, and sat on the bench before the win- ow. And I watched your face for twenty minutes u you sat and rested, and I saw in your face purpose ad power. I am very young, and have seen no oro of the world than any other young coxcomb a dragoon officer; but I have brains enough to e that much. That is why I spoke to you.'

"If he had flattered my beauty, my dear father-in- w, I should have been on my guard in a moment. ur class is so far armed against yours, that we know hat you mean when you begin *that*. What he did as quite of another kind. He talked freely with e, as to a woman with an intellect quite equal, if ot superior, to his own. He discussed with me the uestion of small freeholds, and disagreed with me atly when I defended them on the grounds of tra- ition; as I did, as well as my ignorance would al- ow, making up in bold, possibly fierce, denuncia- ion what I lacked in logic. Half way between Cow- y Bridge and Exeter, he suddenly reminded me hat we had been five miles together, and that we ould scarcely enter the town on the same terms. Then he rode off, and I became aware of my indis- retion; I had been walking for five miles beside a dragoon officer and a gentleman (they are the dan- gerous class to us), and I did not know who might ave seen us. I slept at my aunt's that night, and never moved out of the house. The next morning I set my face steadily homewards, in spite of the old

lady's remonstrances. On my walk I passed the head-quarters of the regiment, and received the usual salutations, which I received with great scorn, in spite of the pleading of my cornet. I got home very late at night, when they were gone to bed.

"James opened the door to me. 'Sister,' he said, 'what brings you home so soon, and why do you look so wild?'

"I answered, 'I am come home because home is the best place for me. If I look wild, it is because I have seen heaven, and am bound in all probability to live fifty years more on earth. Are you going to begin pease-hacking to-morrow?'

"Yes. But something has gone wrong, sister. Tell me what.'

"There'll be a short crop, I doubt,' I answered. 'I wish we could knock enough money together to drain that four-acre. We have had peas three years running on that field, and the pigs don't pay. We are taking more off the land than we are putting in. That can't go on forever.'

"I would not tell him anything; indeed, what had I to tell? Weeks afterwards he went to Exeter, and on coming back told me privately that a Cornet Silcote of the 140th Dragoons had set some of his troopers to watch my aunt's house, and that they had made every inquiry after me. I then knew that I must have been watched to my aunt's, for I am certain I had never told him even my name. This made me distrust him for a time. A very short time, for I loved him; and, although it was wicked of him to watch me, yet—shall I say it?—it was a compliment.

"No more Exeter expeditions now. There was a lion in the path. Peas harvest, barley harvest, wheat harvest, toil, heat, and the old squalid dress once more. Then the acorn hunting for the pigs, and a little revival of vitality when we killed at intervals two pigs for our own use, and lived on them as long as they lasted,—not long in that hot moist climate. Then winter, with sweeping deluges of rain from Dartmoor, and a diet of bad bread and sour cider; all things—tithe, taxes, and every-thing—getting in arrear. Then my brother fell sick, and times got harder yet. I took his gun (for my father was nearly past his work) and I shot golden plover on the moor, a bird which will be still till you are close to him; and then getting bolder I fired at snipe, and killed them too; and lastly, un-assisted, learnt to shoot woodcock. I put my bare arms into the half-frozen streams and pulled out the trout: and once in my innocence, passing through a village near us with my brother's gun on my shoulder, and a quantity of golden plover in my hand, the whole population, children especially, turned out, and hooted and hissed me, as some one who had done an unnatural thing in trying to keep her father and her brother from the workhouse. I sneaked home by by-ways after that.

"But through it all, fool as I was, I had a companion,—a companion whom I could never see, though whom I often addressed. The image of my young friend the cornet of dragoons, was always by me now; though often I wished it far away.

"For it made me ashamed of my squalor and poverty sometimes; sometimes, do I say?—nearly always. He so perfect, so noble, so splendidly decorated,—I so squalid, so untidy, and so rude: an object for the laughter of the children of the village. Times were very hard and bitter with us that winter, as I told you before; and I, a girl of seven-teen, was left to fight everything single-handed. I

used to go shooting (there was no game preserving in our part of the country) in a coat made out of an old sack, and my shoes got so bad that I left them at home and went barefooted. This would have been a deadly offence against the respectability of the villagers, had it been known, but our farm was very secluded, and I managed to creep away into the woodlands generally unobserved. Outlying woodcutters and shepherds saw me sometimes, and reported me mad. I did not discourage this idea.

"But always, whether on the highest roll of the moorland after the golden plover and snipe, or in the depths of holly and oak after the woodcock, or with arms bare to the shoulder groping in the deadly cold water for the trout, the image of the young dragoon was beside me. Sometimes in my early solitary walks, imagining he had found me in my degradation, I would defy him and cast him off, tell him our ways were different, that he saw what I was, and that he should leave me on his honor. At another time I pleaded with him, told him how I was doing all this only for the sake of my father and my sick brother, and prayed him to help us. The fancy, however, which oftenest possessed me about him was this: that old Mr. Lee of Swincombe, our distant Devonshire cousin, was dead, and had left me all his great fortune; and that I came before my dragoon like a princess in satins and jewels, and, by delivering him from dire necessity and disgrace, had him at my feet."

"By Jove," said Silcote, "how extraordinary! Just what has happened,—so far; but I will hold my peace."

"And so I fed my fancy with him until the course of my life was quite changed,—not by an accident, it was simply in the course of events; but in this wise:—"

"The only large proprietor about those parts was the Duke of Cheshire, who had a little cottage *ornée* on the edge of the moor among the woodlands, with nearly a thousand acres around it. The land was not preserved, indeed there was little or nothing to shoot there, and I used to range through it unbidden."

"I had heard that Lord Wargrave, the Duke's eldest son, had come there to spend his honeymoon. My brother, who had crept out into the village, brought me this news, and told me also how his lordship's brother had been killed in a duel, and that Mr. Austin Elliott was in prison for taking part in it, and that the wedding had been quite quiet. I heard it with one ear, and forgot it with the other; and, thinking little in my eagerness of bride or bridegroom, wandered into those very woods the next day."

"I heard men's voices,—one the voice of a gentleman, in the wood,—and two shots were fired. I fled, not because I feared any bad consequences from trespassing, for the Duke was known to us as a gentleman; the largest owner among those miserable little holdings, and consequently the only man who could afford to be a good landlord. I fled because I dreaded to be seen in my miserable guise by a gentleman; and tearing my bare feet among brambles, with a gun in my hand, a coat made of a sack upon my back, and my head perfectly bare, I blundered through copse and brake until I got into an open glade, and looking round, while I paused for breath, I found myself face to face within three feet of the bride, who was sitting quietly on a block of granite, waiting while the bridegroom amused himself by shooting through the wood."

"You know her glorious beauty, and you may conceive how she was dressed. I was a figure which might have upset most people's nerves: bareheaded, bareheaded, with my wild hair about my face, as clothed in my ragged sackcloth, I came suddenly bursting on her with a loaded gun in my hand, as I fear a wild stare in my eyes, which has died as now, Silcote."

"But she was not at all afraid of me. The head of the men of her family has so often made head of the cornfields of Europe, that cowardice has ceased to be one of the vices imputed to her family (as there are plenty of them). Her little silly dog at the sight of me at first barked furiously upon his lap, but, not feeling safe from such a fearful figure as I was, even under her protection, broke away from her, and ran yelping down the glade. I stood before her, utterly abashed, with the gun in my hand, and she, rising, came quietly out to meet me, as wonder and pity in her eyes."

"My dear," she said, "what has brought you to this pass?"

"I am ready with my tongue; and I answered her quickly, 'Empty barn and empty fold; cold house, cold hearth, cold bed, hungry body, and a heavy heart: these things have brought me to this pass, my lady.'

"My dear," she said, "how beautiful you are."

"I might say the same of you, my lady."

"She blushed, and said, 'Where do you find in our happiness we must do something for you.'

"I told her, for the hearth was cold, harvest was off, and the bread-winners of the house starved down."

"Wait a little, my dear," she said; "my husband will be here directly."

"I cannot face a gentleman as I am," I said, and fled away. She was the only one connected with my new life who ever saw me in my degradation; and she kept her secret."

"They came next day, and I was dressed out in my best, so that she scarcely knew me. Her husband was with her: a tall handsome man, with the gentle plastic Barty face, which is so familiar to me now."

"She had won me, and I followed her away. He bought my father's farm, and the money he paid in the purchase was enough to see him into his grave in comfort. I went with her. James went again into the deep clay fallows, turning the treadmill of this bitter agricultural life. And I used to write to him four times a year, regularly. Was it not good of me? And was he not grateful for the attention? There was I, a lady, or at least a lady's maid; and there was he, missing me every hour out of the twenty-four, and toiling in the fallows. But I wrote to him regularly four times a year, and he was grateful."

"I cannot dwell on this period. They spoiled me for the first time and the last time in my life by artificial, false, and ungrateful to my brother. They were all as good as gold,—I will say that for them—but their words, their ideas, were nothing but wind. Among them words and party cries had got crystallized into articles of belief. You have doubtless seen the same thing among very different people—Radical, Whig, and Tory alike. But they educated me in their way, and I grew to be a fine lady. Well, well, I have lingered long on the prettiest bit of my story. I will be briefer with the rest."

"We were at Dunstegan Castle in Scotland, and there was a great company there. The Duke and

ness of Ross-shire were entertaining the world. *Alty* was there at one time, and went in its turn; the departure of *Royalty* put no check on the wities. In this age, with a democracy creeping on, I suppose such a state of things will soon be impossible. All I have to say about it is, it was very beautiful, perfectly harmless, — as ostentation and extravagance can be harmless — and that it enriched that barren and meagre *rtter* of Scotland enormously. But it was too *ating*. Calm thought was utterly impossible. There was no repose. It was one succession of beautiful and magnificent scenes, from the early-morning in the swarming kilts began to awaken from the *ses* where they lay, and collect in the courts, to the last hour of the light northern night, when the *st* dancers crept to rest, to renew the wild splendissipation the next day, — the men to the moor, women to the carriages and horses, the gardens, the river, and the shore. Every one was *tête à tôte*, I among the number.

I did not know who was there and who was not. They came and went, swarm after swarm. When a *inet* minister or a foreign prince came, we, the *ietter* and higher servants, heard of it, and peeped *er* banisters to get a look at him; but of the general company we knew nothing. I was, too, — my *rsenal* appearance, — I had reasons for being, — *ry* quiet. I kept mostly in my lady's rooms. At it came the Duchess of Ross-shire's birthday, and *ere* was to be a great ball in which all the servants are to take part.

"I was intensely delighted. We talked about it *r* days before. It was understood among us that *e* factor was to open the ball with the Duchess, *id* the Duke with the housekeeper. After this *ere* was to be an entirely democratic selection of *artners*. Any one of us might have the sublime *ance* of dancing with a peer of the realm (and *ating* a wound not easily healed, — a bitter, festering wound of discontent and vanity, for if their order *nderstand* anything more than another, it is the art of *making* themselves agreeable to women). We *alked* about it; and, with our silly heads half off our shoulders, we went down into the hall, — the *elect* group among the servants, — and stood, or *at*, in a bevy together.

"The gentlemen were wandering about looking for partners, but a quantity of them were exactly *pposite* to us, and began to look at us, — not in the *east* rudely, I give them all that credit. I selected my partner from among them at once. Lord *Tullygoram* — young, handsome, good-natured, in the *silt*, and covered all over with silver and cairn-gorm stones — took my fancy. My feet were patting the floor in anticipation of the idiotic excitement of dancing, and he looked like a partner worth dancing with. I saw that he was coming towards me, and I was ready for him.

"But it was fated that I was not to dance with him. Another eye had been on him and on me, and his lordship danced with the still-room maid.

"He was too deliberate in his motions. While he was calmly coming across the hall, with what is popularly supposed to be the deliberate stride of the native mountaineer, a figure came between me and him and obscured him, — the figure of a tall man, in ordinary English evening dress. This man said to me: 'You must dance with me first to-night, if it is only for the sake of that precious and never-forgotten talk I had with you on the road between Crediton and Exeter, when I pretended that my

horse was lame, that I might keep pace with your dear, weary little feet. And so I have found you at last.'

"It was Thomas. Was it not like him? You know his tongue.

"Well, there came a quieter time; but we stayed on there and he stayed on. And then we went to another Scotch house; and the end of it was that he came after me, and we were married, before witnesses, in the Scotch way. End of it, I say. No. The end of it was that he left me before my boy was born, and went abroad with his regiment. You know his vague, purposeless way. You know how he will never face facts. You, who have paid his debts so often, must know that. When he got tired of me, he did not choose to face the fact of my being his wife. He left me to assert it; and I would have died in the workhouse sooner than do that.

"I went straight back to my good brother and told him the truth. I can make him do anything. I made him move up into Berkshire, and live in that cottage outside your park-gates. Why, I cannot tell you exactly. To be near him, and yet away from him. To have the chance of seeing him sometimes, yet with a certainty, almost, that I should never see him. He was faithless to me; I knew that. But why go on to analyze the motives of a wronged, angry, and fierce woman, whose motives were entirely passionate, and never reasonable. I have been tamed since I parted with you in the garden.

"I believe that I have outlived my love for him. I cannot say, but I think so. My first purpose in coming to live at your gates was a mere whim of a fanciful temper. But we got there into utter poverty, — into the deep clay-rut of agricultural life, from which there is no turning. My soul got deadened with the everlasting weary routine, and utter poverty once more became a habit. My brother might have spoken, and urged me to appeal to old friends; but my brother is one of that order which seldom speaks, except in blazing ricks. The habit of his order kept him silent.

"How many years did I live there, bringing up your grandson on your own estate? Nearly twelve, I think. And my bitter, fierce temper lasted all that time. James and I passed for man and wife for convenience sake. I drudged in the fields with him, and we had a hard life of it. My boy grew in beauty and intelligence, and I educated him; but I had a bitter feud against the upper orders, and I determined that he should not be in any way connected with them. In my darkest hours I used to say that he should avenge my wrongs against the order which had wronged me. That this was a folly madder than your own I will allow; but I was as mad as this once.

"It was a weary time, Silcote, — a dull time. I have a considerable sense of humor, and I love amusement. I had nothing to amuse me all that time, with one exception. If it had not been for that one thing which kept my sense of humor still alive, I might have gone mad. It is possible. But there was one object always before me which made me laugh, which kept up some sort of communication with the world I had left through my sense of humor, which means, I take it, sympathy, in the main. What was that object? Why, I will tell you. It was you yourself: the dreadful Dark Squire Silcote, who went swearing and scolding about among his bloodhounds. If I had known, as I do now, how deeply and shamefully you had been

abused, I should have sympathized with you. But in those times you were always to me a great standing absurdity. (Yes, my dear Silcote, you may pitch this letter to the other end of the room, but I never was a bit afraid of you, and I am not now.)"

(Silcote had actually done that same thing. But after having picked the letter up again, and read the paragraph between brackets, as above, he felt terribly guilty, and only said, "Confound the woman.")

"You were then ridiculous to me. At first, I thought you merely ill-conditioned; but watching you very closely, and hearing a great deal about you, I changed my opinion of you. You were still ridiculous, and you are now, you know, when in your old mood; but I began to say to myself, 'That man is not the mere fantastic ruffian he wishes to appear.' I was confirmed in my opinion. The peasant drudges about you gave you a good character, — a character which many a smooth-faced, gentle-spoken man would be glad to have. They told me of many and many acts of kindness and generosity which you had done, and for which they in their way loved you. These acts of kindness were done in a brutal and coarse way, but they are used to brutality and coarseness, and the effects of your good acts, and the memory of them, remained behind in these peasants' minds long after the coarse words with which they were accompanied had died out in their ears.

"So I studied you, until I got in a small degree to pity you, and, last and strangest of all, to love you. I thought we had something in common; I knew not what. Who can predicate either quality or accident of a woman's soul, which traverses so fantastically all your well-built average rules? (We are the only true radicals; keep us on a Christian basis, if you can manage it for us.) I got to love you, Silcote; and got to trust you.

"I had never seen my husband all this long time. He had been often at Silcote's for a short time, yet I never had seen him. I have done evil by him. I might have reclaimed him. Though he had thrown me over, yet he practically allowed that he dared not marry, for he never, in his most prosperous times, attempted to do so. I saw him again after twelve years, and the sight of him stirred me, I cannot say why, to new action.

"The gamekeeper roused us in the night to tell us the poachers were in the wood, and standing in the doorway I saw *him* outside in the moonlight. My brother went out to fight for the game in which he had no share, — to fight on the mere instincts of his order against lawless and inexcusable vagabonds. When I went up stairs to look at my darling in his bed, I found that he had escaped me, and had gone also. I lit a fire, and sat up for them, waiting. I could not pray then, but I could think.

"I could think, but I could come to no conclusion. I was not certain of my legal position, and dreaded branding my boy with illegitimacy, and ruining his life in that way. My brother was brought home to me, half killed in defending your game. My boy ran back to me in the morning, frightened to death by your bloodhounds, bruised fearfully; and then you came, and proposed to make my noble James, your own grandson, groom, page, steward's-roon boy, or what not, out of your high and mighty condescension.

"A worm will turn, and I am not a worm. I fear I gave it to you sadly. But I saw that I must either claim my rank, or else put myself in a false position by staying where I was. When you had

proposed to me that morning to make your heir (if Algernon is not righted, he is your heir) a great I determined to move. My brother was real. The only question was about the boy.

"I gave you the boy. You remember our interview in the garden. I gave you the boy, and you have done well by him. I have no complaints to offer there. You have done better by the boy than I could have done myself. I thank you for it. Let the boy be, and let me be, as we were. Not a man knows who I am or what I have been, except myself and my brother. Wait.

"My brother. He is a soldier, a ten-year's man invalided now from wounds got in the Crimea. Leave him alone, until I tell you what to do for him. As for James, let him go to Italy: and as for you, leave me here in peace. I can part with him again now, for a time. I have won the boy's love on a new ground. He would have loved me by tradition before; he loves me by choice now. Since that motherless boy were set to choose a mate from all the women in England, he would choose me, which is something.

"Leave things as they stand. Let the wheel go full circle. We are not so much worse of than our neighbors. There are things which trouble the little Silcote world: I mean the little *vice* which circles round you and your money. You see the greatest difficulty. I dread setting you right in your lifelong mistake, but I will have it done, nevertheless. You cannot gain anything by believing I lie about the only woman you ever loved: I say no more now; let us turn our attention to smaller matters. Arthur is in love with my cousin, Miss Lee, who has got all the Swincombe property, as James tells me (he might have left me something, I think); and Miss Lee will now have nothing to say to him. Can you set that right? There are other little troubles which you and I must see to. These children have grown up, while we have been foolishly wasting our lives on old loves and old grievances. These children are now grown up, and they have begun the foolish world-old habit of falling in love with one another. And there is mischief brewing amongst them.

"James and Dora are in love with one another. I would not have it otherwise; but Reginald, our poor nonentity, is in love with Anne. A very nice arrangement among the cousins, but for this: that Anne is unhappily in love with James. It is to the credit of her good taste, I will allow; but it will breed desperate mischief. You say they are all children together; may be so, but turn your mind towards it. Reginald and Anne are dangerous characters. Reginald I have studied, Anne I only know from James. Be careful. Send James to Italy, and let Reginald go with him. That is my latest advice. Now, good by."

Silcote folded up the letter, and put it in his breast coat-pocket. "Italy, Italy, Italy, and all Italy together," he said. "James is to go to Italy, and Reginald with him. And Anne is to go to Italy. I have committed myself to that in a way, but she may be stopped at Baden. And my sister has not been there for a long time, and so may be considered almost due. And they are beginning to knock up another dust there, and so Frangipanni will go there if he can raise the money; and Sir Godfrey Mallory has come home, — a sure sign that there is mischief brewing. Old Raylock will get tired of toasting her old shins against my coals, and taking away my character afterwards, and she'll go. Then

ar's health will give way, and *he'll* go. And Mrs. Tom will get a new fancy for her precious und, and *she'll* go. And Tom will be certainly *ered* in Lombardy, and *he'll* be there, for the sion of counsel. And then I shall get bored, *I* shall go: and there will be no one left in and but Algernon and Dora, to do the respecta- as while we are smelling uselessly-burnt gun- ler. For, as I always tried to hammer into the en head of the man Garibaldi, you will do no with that Sardinian monarchy. An Italian ral republic is the only chance for them: and is no chance of that. If they move, Austria France will fight over them, and the winner pick their bones. And Austria must win, her has come. I may go and see the fight, and be hanged if I can see why Dora should not too. Hang Italy! Am I never to have done it?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

BREAKING UP.

ECEMBER had lain his hand on the lake at St. y's, and it was a sheet of gray ice, with here there a wisp of white snow upon its surface. All and the level lines of the moorland were white nst a gray sky, except where broken by the blackish-green of the Scotch fir woods. The rtiful building itself, generally of a pearl gray, looked muddy-colored and dirty amidst the ing white of the snow-drift. Winter had come he place, in short, and with winter breaking-up, and for James and Reginald the last of St. y's forever. We may leave Reginald.

ames, with a glorious career just opening to , panting and eager to begin it, was probably it as happy as any mortal man ever was in this ld. Young, strong, clever, innocent, without ets, but living in a glorified atmosphere of ndid hopes, I doubt if the human imagination ld conceive of any one more unutterably happy. had possibly a few sentimental memories just , the effect of which was so mildly, deliciously rnfal and pathetic, that they were even more rming than his glorious, jubilant, half-maddening fidence in the splendid future before him.

or the old place, so new and yet so old to him, become very dear to him. He had "kenned biggin' o' it," as Edie Ochiltree says. There he first made acquaintance with a very beautiful l happy life; and even in anticipation of the re beautiful life, — the life which was to be spent ong objects of Italian beauty, to which the dim ds of Hampshire were cold and wan, — even r, with a feeling of joy upon him near akin to t pain which they call, I think, *præcordial* diety, he had a few gentle regrets connected with old place, which balanced his joy and made it rable. Recall, if you are not too old, the last e you were *glad*; and you will more than half y work for me. But it was so long ago, you t. Still, try to recall it. I suspect that it was the r you left school, or the day you first went to pel in your cap and gown, on the last day of r apprenticeship.

mpatiently going round and round the college, m chapel to dormitory, all the morning, and king to his old friends who swarmed round him, l not quiet him very much. He was to go the xt morning, but he could not think of having to

say good by to any of them. They were all going, and he would, as he thought, certainly meet them again. He did not like to say good by to them, and persuaded himself that it would not be necessary. But there was one in that establishment to whom he must say good by, for he knew well that he should see his face no more; and so, instead of going to dinner in hall at one o'clock, he went to the outer lodge at the end of the grounds, and, sitting down in the warm little parlor, took his old friend Ben Berry's hand in his, and looked wistfully into his face, saying not one word.

The old man was very old now: the clock was near stopping, and could not be wound up in this world. But the withered, gnarled old hand, which James did not hold, went feebly up among the young man's curls, and lingered there lovingly.

"I knew you'd come," he said. "I never reported you on earth, but I'll report you in heaven. You have been a good boy to me."

James sat silent.

"You was a poor little boy when you came, but see what you've grown to. Similarly I ain't much to look at just now, though I was a fine young man once. Look at me, James, and keep me in your mind. If God gives you life and health, you'll be like me one day; and after that again, — and after that again, —"

The old man said this sentence three or four times over, and James had tact enough not to speak: only to press the old fellow's hand. His feeble old mind went on another tack.

"Listening! Well, yes. You boys want a listener at times, and so do other folks. But I never reported a boy yet for anything I heard haphazard at a door, and I won't report her. There is nothing dishonorable in a school porter listening: but if he reports on it, he gets dishonorable, and deserves to lose his place. I'm the oldest school porter in England, and I ought to know the international law between porter and boy, if any man does. And that's the law. And it extends to matrons and chairmen equally."

James thought he was wandering. "I start for Italy to-morrow, Ben," he said. "I have come, — for I must say it, — to say good by. You have been as kind and as faithful a friend as ever I had; and I thank you so very, very much. But I go to Italy to-morrow."

"To Italy to-morrow? I am bound on a longer journey, but I shall be at my journey's end before you, for all that. Then good by. I can't make your face out clear. But be good to your mother as you were to me. Your mother is a woman in ten thousand. There is nothing you should n't do for your mother. Stick to her through thick and thin. A man never has a mother but once, and seldom such a mother as yours."

James made his farewell to the old fellow (who soon died), and went his way, believing him to be rambling in his mind. The half-year's prizes were to be given away that afternoon at two o'clock, and the County was coming. He thought for the time little about old Berry's wandering.

Sir Godfrey Mallory in a great barouche, all alone, dressed in priceless sables, with the fur inside, and shivering, was the first arrival. Silcote in a bran new travelling carriage (Anne's), and four horses with scarlet postilions, was so close after him that Silcote had time to dismount, and offer his arm to Sir Godfrey Mallory as he got down. Sir Godfrey bowed and smiled at this attention, not in the

least recognizing his old enemy; and Miss Raylock, who had arrived in a fly from the nearest railway station, and had been forced to get out of it, having recognized the two carriages, for the purpose of seeing the meeting of the two old enemies and studying human nature, was stricken motionless in the snow.

And the rest of the County, who resided close by, were there. The frost had stopped the hunting, and there was nothing to do: and, as the foolish old song says, "Anything is fun in the country," and so there they were to see the prizes given away; manners preventing them from yawning in each other's faces; sitting about on the benches, telling each other where they had dined every day for the last week, and finding out from one another where they were going to dine the next; good, kindly, intelligent, honest folks as ever lived, but more idiotic in their worship of mere habit than the Indians who are swung on hooks at a fair, leaving alone the fact that the Indian process has the advantage of cheapness, which the English form of prescriptive martyrdom has not. I suppose they both, — as Mr. Mad Dick in "David Copperfield" says, to the great indignation of Aunt Betsey, — "do it for pleasure."

However, here were the county folks, trying to gain a feeble amusement by seeing the prizes given away at St. Mary's, and they formed an important and imposing audience. Silcote gave away the prizes. Each master in turn gave aloud the names of the boys under his charge, and they were called up to receive them. Silcote did his work very well indeed, giving a few kindly sensible words, accompanied in every instance by a clever point or epigram, to each of the boys as he came up. He had been famous for neat and concentrated, and also sometimes for sharp language in old times, and he was pleased to find that the old trick was not lost with so much else, and came out. The County were charmed with the vivacity and cleverness of this mysterious man, who had held them all at bay so long.

The classical boys came first of all, and when they were done the commercial boys. Then the winners of French prizes, named by M. Leroy; then the German, named by M. Meyer; and then the Italian.

Silcote, rising, once more said, "We have now only to ask Signor Frangipanni to name the winners of prizes in his class, and then we will proceed to the prize of the day, and conclude the proceedings." He did not sit down again; he looked right and left steadily, for he could not make out where Signor Frangipanni was sitting, and he had a deep eagerness to see him. He would have liked to watch Sir Godfrey Mallory also, but that was impossible.

The noble-looking old Italian advanced into the middle of the hall as the others had done, and he and Silcote looked steadily at one another without anything more than a formal bow. An interest, intense even now, and soon to grow more intense still, was arising in the hearts of Englishmen about Italian men and Italian things. And the Count knew it, and, coming once more into public after ten years, felt that he was showing this knot of English country gentlemen what an Italian and a conspirator could be like.

He was not among an audience very keen on the object which was nearest to his heart, perhaps; but the country gentlemen knew a gentleman when they saw one, and the ladies were tolerably good judges of perfect dignity and perfect grace; and, as the Americans say, were "excited along of him."

That splendid-looking, grizzle-headed man, so grand, so upright, had experiences of which he could know nothing. He had been imprisoned, escaped, had been hunted and proscribed; he had been through every kind of misery and danger, his cause, and had come out with a pure and unstained name. It was impossible not to admire him. A buzz went round the hall, so loud as to give a pause to the proceedings, as the better informed told the less informed about him. — Frangipanni, the decemvir, — escape from Spandau, cut his way out of Rome in command of Garibaldi's rearguard; — the actions of Garibaldi. Saù, Manin, and a dozen others, were named and placed to his credit, as rapidly as they could be remembered. The impulsive English found themselves in possession of the desire of their hearts, and he a Count of a great name, and born so loudly, that Count Frangipanni could not be heard.

At this point Arthur the unaccountable, who was moving from the chair in which he sat by his face with a somewhat cynical smile on his very young face, outraged the decency of a head-master by crying out suddenly and sharply. — "Vire Garibaldi!" A cheer went ringing round the hall, correctly. Tories as they mostly were, they had a cheer for the purity and valor of that one man.

Frangipanni flushed up to the roots of his hair, but stood stately and immovable, only bowing; and when the noise had subsided they heard his voice — clear, strong, and melodious, nearly without a cent. He passed over the late little demonstration without notice.

"My class has been small, sir, but I have been diligent with it. Continual diligence in politics begets diligence in everyday matters, and diligence in the master makes diligence in the pupil. My class of five would get prizes, all of them, elsewhere; but I must select. I name Reginald Silcote as gaining the prize, and James Sugden as *proxime*."

The gratified Squire delivered the prize in this instance in silence; and Arthur, walking swiftly down to Count Frangipanni, talked eagerly with him for a few minutes, and then, having put a paper into his hand, walked back to his chair, leaving Frangipanni still standing in the centre of the hall. They all wondered why until he spoke.

"Our good head-master," he said, in his graceful dignified way, "has put a labor of love upon me, which I am proud to discharge, however unimportant it is as a parting compliment to me, but what compliment have I earned in so short a time? It cannot be that he trusts this honor to a poor exile, because there are some so ignoble and so wretched here as to doubt the nobility, the purity, and the excellency of his character. That he is unpopular! No! That is impossible. I will not believe that. It is not in England that perfect justice and kindness should not be appreciated. It is because I go from England into the dark south cloud, to death or prison, that he gives me this pleasant commission; and so is all. I will to my duty then."

"There has been a prize established here, late and gentlemen, on these grounds. The whole school are to elect by ballot the boy who has made himself most *répandu*, most popular, during the year, and to send his name to the head-master for approval. They have done so, and the head-master has enthusiastically approved of their choice. The name of the boy they have chosen is my friend James Sugden."

the heads went down: the Squire's for one in- then James's, who had been a little idle, and t beyond the region of prizes, and was utterly ared for this; and, lastly, his mother's, sit- almy in a distant corner of the hall unob- , and her head remained down longest.

es was brought forward to receive his prize, he proceedings being as good as over, the boys loose and swarmed around him: and from l and well-tried comrades, down to the very corner, there were none who had not kind ac- and kind words of his to thank him for now o remember hereafter. It was a glorious tri- , — such a triumph as never comes twice in a ne except to statesmen with long dulled enthu- , and more or less carefully-guarded passions. may get hysterically glad in great successes, hey can't be boys again. Joy is the insepa- accident of youth. If one was to be joyful I suspect it would make one very ill.

ey all crowded out of the hall together to- s the cloisters; the county folks, the masters, boys, — every one. James was congratulated l sides, and having been utterly *tête montée* all was now considerably upset. In the midst of crowd he found himself alongside of the matron, nother, — to him only his friend Mrs. Morgan, was calmly steering her way through them all, her gray head bare, and her gray shawl droop- from her splendid throat over her handsome lders; he clutched her arm, and, looking inno- ly into her quiet eyes, said, passionately, — I wish my mother could see me now! I have a thinking so much of her lately. O, I wish to l she could see me now! I shall never be so thy of her again." and she bent forward in the midst of them all, kissed him three times on his forehead, and said, /ait! wait! I cannot tell you why, but wait!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A HAPPY MEETING.

I THINK it very likely that, if there had been any uor-shops close to St. Mary's, that James, in the l flush of his excitement on this last and most umphant day at the old place, would have got silly tipsy. But he had no opportunity, and cer- nly no inclination. He knew nothing of the ecis of stimulants more than any other St. Mary's l. There were legends among the oldsters of ys having got drunk in the old times, when the llege was in town, but those legends were now ry old indeed, and the only creed among the boys out drinking was that it was a manly and gentle- anly habit, from which they were unfortunately barred. The lad, therefore, tired with pleasure ad excitement, wended himself, in a pleasantly eary frame of mind, to his mother's room about alf past nine, and found her more busy than usual mong her maids, giving all kinds of careful direc- ons, apparently with a view to her departure.

He had time to gather this much before she spoke o him. She only smiled at him when he first came n, and asked him by her eyes to stay. After a lit- le time she said to the maids, "I think everything s in perfect train, now. See that I find it so on my eturn; I shall not be long. Work as if I was look- ng on at you, — firstly, because it is your duty; and secondly, because I shall demand an inexorable ac-

count from you when I come back. Those are no workers, to my taste, who can only work under the master's eye. — My dear James, you are, of all people in the world, the one I wished to see most."

It was the first time she had ever called him by his Christian name; he wondered why, and she her- self could not have told him at that time. She was still undecided whether she would reveal herself to him or not.

"James," she said, when the maids were gone, "you go to Silcotes to-morrow? How?"

"I shall walk, Mrs. Morgan. I came to say good by. I can't exactly begin —"

"Then don't begin. That is perfectly easy, is it not? I also am going to Silcotes; I also am going to walk. I want you, if you will do so much for an old woman, to let me walk with you, and to show me the way. Will you do this for me? I walk fast and far, and must be back quickly, for my good maidens are, with all their good intentions, but dis- jointed limbs without their head. Will you under- take the old woman?"

"Undertake you!" said James. "Why, I'll wheel you there in a Bath-chair, if you like. But it is nonsense. I tell you you will never get there on foot. I make a bee line of it, and it is three and twenty miles."

"Three-and-twenty fiddlesticks, boy. No distance at all. Will you show me the way?"

"I should like to, better than I can tell. Do you think you can manage it?"

"I will walk as fast as you will, and as far. Go to bed, your head is hot; to-morrow morning at ten, then, at the south end of the cloisters."

The south end of the cloisters was close to the great gate, and was the place at which people generally waited before departure. James, his uniform now cast off forever, was early there; he was, in fact, the very first arrival.

But he was not long alone; he was joined by Reginald, now a pale-faced youth of some eighteen years, with a weak and small, but very pretty and gentle face. He, too, had finished his academical career the night before, and had left the dormitory, and had slept at his father's, and so James had not seen him since the last evening. James saw that he was vexed at something, and asked him what it was. The relations between them hitherto were merely those of a boy with character and boldness acting on one without either, overlaid with a strong boyish affection; relations scarcely worth noticing until now. James asked him, confidentially, what was the matter.

"Queen Elizabeth was a Tartar, I expect," said Reginald. "Don't you think she was?"

"What the deuce do I care? She had the tongue of her family, and lashed out at times; but she is dead, you know."

"Ah! but Anne ain't dead though, and she has got the tongue of *her* family, too. I'll back the Silcote tongue against the Tudor any day of the week. And I have been having a taste of it this morning."

"You generally seem to be getting a taste of it, Reg, as far as I see. Why don't you give her as good as she brings? You have got the Silcote tongue, too, have n't you? Why don't you pitch into her?"

"Because I can't. She stabs me with a dagger, while I lose my temper, and make blind hits at her with a cudgel. She makes me lose temper, and consequently judgment, in a moment. *She* never loses her temper."

"Loses it? No, I should think not. It is too visible a thing to be lost. Why, Reg, there is nothing about her but her temper, except her beauty. She won't lose her beauty till she is old, and her temper is far too *pronounced* to be lost, or even mislaid for long. It's a shrewish temper, and she is a shrew. Why the dickens do you bother yourself with her?"

"Just hear what she said to me at my own father's breakfast-table this morning."

"What is the good?" said the gentle James. "What on earth is the good? She has irritated you this morning: is that any reason why you should irritate yourself all over again? Besides, here she comes herself, and will, if I know her, let us know all that has past. Let be."

Anne's horse and groom had been sent over from Silcotes, and she was to ride back. She came quickly towards them down the cloister, in her gray riding-habit, with the long skirt of it caught over one hand, and her whip in the other. A trim, pretty, doll-like little figure, with a very pretty, small-featured face, terribly hard set about the mouth, and nearly as narrow, from eye to eye, as her own grandfather's, "the impersonation of Silcotism," as Miss Raylock once called him.

Her greeting had all the suspicion and all the abruptness of that remarkable family, or, to be more correct, of all the members of that family whom Miss Raylock set down as "true Silcotes." She never said "Good morning," or anything of that sort, but she went up to James, and said, —

"So he has been telling you *his* story, then?"

"All right," said the perfectly placid James. "Now you turn to, and tell us yours."

"I knew he would," said Anne. "I was perfectly sure that he would take the opportunity of my putting on my riding-habit, to take his story to you. I *knew* that."

"Well, but you see," said James, "that he has n't done anything of the sort. Now let us have *your* story to begin with. I know nothing of his. Why on earth do you two squabble and fight so? What is the matter this time? Was not there bread and butter enough for the pair of you?"

Anne tossed her head, and turned away. If James could have seen her face, he would have known, boy as he was in reality, that for the moment she hated him.

To more pleasant matters. Old Algernon joined them. He looked very gray, very gentle, and very good, and he came to James, —

"You will make a success if you do as well in the world as you have done here," — and gave him good advice.

James, though not in the least inclined for goody talk on that particular morning, as little inclined as are my readers, listened to it respectfully, but was relieved by the arrival of Arthur, who at least changed the conversation, though possibly turned it into a less agreeable channel. Probably he has been called "prig" too often in these pages; he was more than that. Everything he did was done with a will, using generally a miserly minimum of means towards the largest maximum of end. He did exactly the same with his money, and so, in these times, he stands out as a consistent and virtuous character. He was niggardly and cautious with his money, though he had protested against his brother Tom's disinheritance. He was niggardly and cautious in his sympathy with the boys under his charge, because he hated the idea of discounting, in the

very smallest degree, his prestige as head-master; abating one jot of the newly-gained power among two hundred boys. A power which was the dear to his heart, because it was more absolute, and more easily and more visibly exercised, than any power he had possessed before; it was a greater power than his old power as proctor of Oxford. He loved it proportionately more. The more power, force, will, call it what you like, he loved it. He hoarded his money, because he knew that his brother Thomas had lost power by squandering it; he utilized the power which his conduct towards that brother had given him in the eyes of his father, because he wished to discount his generosity in a form of power over his father: and he was cold and unsympathetic with his boys, because it was his nature, and his nature had been doubly confirmed in him by a course of unpopular Oxford domineering.

He was not fond of James. James was just a mere genial, idle being, who had stayed at school, had got to the top of it, and, not having a University career before him, had become perfectly idle, certainly popular. Arthur did not like popular boys; he himself, the salt of the earth, had been always eminently unpopular. He had an objection to popular boys. There was one gliding out of his clutches, though still in his cloisters, and he knew it. Besides, he was desperately angry with Miss Lee.

"Well, boy," he began. "And so my father consented to send you to Italy to study art. Goodness knows you need it. But you will make a man of it; you have n't got either brain or genius. The only reason I see for his decision is that you may be fit for it, and that you are certainly fit for nothing else. I saw one gleam of genius in you once, in a caricature of me, but it was evanescent. I would have pressed on him sending you to the University, but I did n't think you were worth the trouble and expense."

James was out of his power, and had no idea of his relationship to him; and he had a stammering tongue, and could possibly have given him as good as he brought. But he did not. When Arthur had done with his bitter hard words, he went quickly to him, took his hand and said, —

"Before we part I have got to thank you for all your kindness and care for me since you have been here. You know as well as myself how utterly undeserving I have been of it. I wish to tell you, sir, that my faults have only been due to a natural boisterousness which I will try to correct" (he looked very like it, he looked a very likely person to "correct boisterousness"; but the lad was in earnest and must not, if possible, be laughed at). "I was very much, sir, before we part, to impress on you the fact that you have won my entire esteem and respect. And I'll tell you something more, sir. The other fellows don't like you, but they trust you."

Arthur flushed up scarlet; he was outdone in generosity by a boy he had thought to worry into impertinence. The "gentleman" burst out of him instantly. "You are a noble fellow, sir. If you turn chimney-sweep or scavenger you will be a gentleman still. I ask your pardon for having misceived you. My health is very bad, and my life is extremely uncertain. With my health my temper suffers: I will try to correct it. I should have wished a different career for you, but for such a noble nature as yours I have no anxiety. Your future will be turbulent and wild, but try to keep by the old path."

raw nearer death I only love it more. Write from Italy."

ly, and again Italy," said Count Frangipanni behind them; "and they all talk of Italy

And I come to make my *congé* to the best of ad-masters, and I wait and wait long time, till ad-master has done walking up and down the

with his hand on the shoulder of my pupil, Sugden. And I hear the word Italy, and gives excuse to break my manners, and to make

For the train will wait at Basingstoke, but for me. And from Basingstoke the iron lines uthward. Whither? Into thunder-cloud, into

ness, into blood, into fury and madness; into peaceful, everlasting sunshine. And I must go."

What, you are at it again, you folks, are you?" Arthur, in a tone which was decidedly not sym-

etic with the cause of Italian freedom, though ad the day before called out "Viva Garibaldi!"

ie of his unaccountable moods. "You are at it a, are you? after '48 too. Well, 'he who will

upar maun to Cupar.' The Tuscans won't go you, they are too well governed; and, if you

anything from the Sardinian monarchy, you madder than I take you for. And, on your very

movement, France will be over the Alps on, in anticipation of Austria; and there will be a

t between Austria and France over your carcass, Austria will win one great battle, and after that

consent to annex Piedmont, giving France Sa-, Nice, and Tuscany, and consenting to a joint

tectorate over the rest of Northern Italy. You better leave it alone and stay here."

To which remarks Count Frangipanni bowed his d three times solemnly, and in perfect silence,

trusting himself to express his wonder in words, de his *congé* to the head-master, and backed

ay over Mr. Betts, who said, — "Now then, Count! I ain't done anything against

lian liberty to deserve having my bunion trod on e that. Do you know that Kriegsthum has

oked it?" "That Kriegsthum has hooked it?" said the

unt. "I am at a little loss to fathom the mean- g of what you say. Hook it?"

"Ahl hooked it, Count. But lor, it's n' use lking slang to a gentleman like you. Cut a way,

o you understand? Hopped his twig; sloped; izzled it; made his lucky; you understand *that*?"

The Count shook his head, and went away in the irection of James.

Betts stayed with Arthur and Algernon. "There some sort of a game up among 'em," he said, "and can't get to the bottom of it. They are all going

outh, into the very country where their heads ain't orth twopence a dozen. Your aunt's gone, you

now, but she'd go anywhere where there was con- sion. She ought to have been christened 'Confu-

sion Silcote,' only the same name would be equally plicable to every member of the family I have

ever seen, — present company excepted, of course. And Dembinsky, he's going, but he'd go anywhere

for the sake of mere confusion for its own sake. Old Frangipanni is going, which looks queer; and old

Mother Raylock is going; she *may* be in Short's Gardens with her tea-parties and her flowers, and

may want to get materials for another novel in her old age. I can account for all of them. But what

utterly upsets and shuts me up is this: They are all going, but old Kriegsthum is *gone*, and took a

hundred pounds of mine with him. He never went in '48; he stayed. There's a game up, sir, and my

opinion of it is, the Lord help the Pope. Mrs. Morgan, my dear madam, I wish you a good day and a pleasant journey. Be back as soon as you can, for we shall never get on without you now."

She had joined the group while they had been talking, and now, after bowing and smiling round, beckoned James that she was ready. She wore her usual gray clothes, a little prepared for walking, the only addition to her costume being a close gray hood. She started, accompanied by James, at once, after a few words of farewell, and those who were left saw the strange pair walk swiftly away together. They saw them skirt the lake, and lost them at the edge of the wood; then they saw them top the highest summit of the moorland, and disappear against the sky.

They had a great pleasure in one another's society, and, although the way was long, and the road rough with frost and snow, it seemed short and cheerful. They talked about many things, she pointing out to him the chances, the dangers, and the glories of his future career as an artist, from time to time, so that he was never bored with her serious talk, but only excited and elevated. Then they talked of the crops, and the soil, and the poor, until, after twenty miles, the lanes began to rise and grow rougher, and Boisey held his beech-crowned head, now delicately silvered with snow, close above them in their path.

"Tired, my dear?" she asked.

"I tired! But how about you? What a splendid walker you are!"

"I have been used to it all my life. I used to walk twenty miles into Exeter at one time. And I walked that road once too often."

"Did you have an accident?"

"An accident? Yes."

"It has not crippled you. You walk strong and free."

"I had need. I have a long journey before me, and many things to do by the way; and time gets short."

"In which direction does your way lead you?"

"That I cannot tell you; I have hardly any idea. It depends entirely on a few people whose wills have always been as unsettled as the sea. You are one of those people. Learn, therefore, to be strong. Take any line you like, but hold to it; and leave me no more of these tangled skeins to set right."

"But what is your destination in this journey of yours?"

"My destination is the same as your own, — the grave. I have a life to live out, and I am going to try to put certain things right before I die. What things, I scarcely know. How, I do not see. I believe that I may require your assistance. I may or I may not. I cannot see my way as yet. If I require, if I *command*, your assistance, let me find no whimpering, sentimental boy, but a self-possessed, cool-headed man. You are gentle and lovable; I want more than that. I may want you to show your mettle on emergency. Not in fisticuffs, or any rubbish of that sort, but in hard intellectual pluck. There is mischief coming. There is death coming. I have dreamt of fallen angels, still wearing their white garments, being hurled over a high precipice into a deep unfathomable pool of black water by thousands. I know one who wears white still. Never wear white, boy, it shows the bloodstains so openly; whether the blood be Polish, Hungarian, or Italian, it shows all the same. Here is the old short cut, through this gap, you forgetful boy. Tur-

nips this year again : how is that ? God help me ! my memory must not go yet. Turnips ! I must be a year wrong. Wheat, barley, clover, is three, and turnips, wheat, barley, and clover is four, which is seven. Quite right. And turnips again is eight. And you are turned nineteen, which makes it quite right. Don't you see ?

James did not see at all ; but he said, " I will go with you through thick and thin. But I cannot understand what you are speaking about — "

" I hardly understand myself," she interrupted. " You will probably know more in less than half an hour. But I can say nothing even about that. Don't brush your feet through the turnips like that ; lift them over. If you cut away the heart of the turnip with your boots, the frost will get in and destroy the turnip, and if the turnip is destroyed, the farmer will suffer ; and if the farmer suffers, the laborer will suffer more. For the farmer, having no margin, but living from hand to mouth, but feeling the dread, horror, and disgrace of bankruptcy always before him, oppresses the laborer, who is undegradable, being in a chronic state of bankruptcy. They used to say that taxes ultimately fall on the producer. They have altered that now, I believe. But remember when — I mean if ever — you come into any property, that every pound spent in luxury represents a loss of seven shillings and sixpence to the wealth of the nation. Look there, — there is old Avery creeping out in the sun. He don't look a bit older. Did ever anybody see the like of that ? "

She had totally puzzled James. He could not make " head or tail " of her. I hope that the reader is only puzzled by her political economy.

" We turn off here," said James.

" The lane is better walking," she answered.

" You have been here before, and you know the people too," said James, as though he had made a brilliant discovery.

And she said, " Wait. It is inconceivable to me that mere absence should have dulled memory to this extent. Let us see. After all, it is a mere psychological question. It does not touch one's heart, or the sentimental part of one, in the least. "

In the muddiest part of the muddiest lane, James, in a state of puzzled and wondering submission, stopped her in her rapid walk for a moment.

" I lived here once," he said, and pointed to the old cottage.

She turned, and looked him full and steadily in the face, for her mind was made up now. There was to be no more deceit in her life. She looked him straightly, steadily in the face, and merely said, " You lived here once ? Does the sight of the old place bring up no memories ? Do you remember your mother ? "

Not in the least. He looked her straight in the face, and answered, " No. "

The door was ready for unlocking ; but the key was still a quarter of a mile away.

Wending on through the woodlands they came to a part of them where nature began to be slightly assisted by art ; laurels and laurustinus began to appear, and, after the first wire fence was passed, the signs of order grew more and more visible, until the scarcely-marked roadway grew into a gravel-drive, and, joining another and a larger one, which formed the main approach to the house, came to an end.

She walked steadily on in silence through the glades of the densely-timbered deer-park, catching glimpses from time to time of the crowded and deep

red chimneys and gables of Silcote. What were before the porch, she spoke again.

" I wonder whether the bloodhounds are lost."

" You are perfectly safe with me," he answered still in wonder ; and they passed into the old lane.

Here were the dogs grouped round the standing, sitting, and lying, blinking their soft eyes at it. And in the centre of them a man of great stature, who was bending thought over the blaze, with his feet upon the stone on either side of it.

A soldier, as it seemed to James, for he wore high military collar, and had some sort of silver coutrements on his back. The dogs seemed to him, and one had leaned its great head against his knee.

A slight movement among the dogs, in consequence of their recognizing James, caused him to look round and rise. When James had finished caressing the only one of the lazy animals which came to meet him, he looked at the man again. I was a soldier of some sort, and was of great importance James saw, and then he suddenly gasped in surprise and twitched his arms. His mother stood perfectly silent ; looking eagerly on.

It was a strange thing, but he knew his mother when he had been quite unable to recognize his mother. James Sugden's face (it was he who was before James, in the dress of a commissioner) had changed but little in his Crimean campaign ; his mother's had changed so much, — not only appearance, but in expression. As for Sugden, it was the great, peaceful, placid, affectionate gentleman had ever been. James, in a startled voice, called him by his old title, and, as he saw the old gentleman's smile come into his face, he dashed forward with shout, and had him by both arms.

" Is mother here ? " was his first eager question when he looked for half a minute on the dear old face. " Have you brought her ? "

" Yes ! here she is, old man," said Sugden, turning towards her. James saw no one but Mrs. Morgan, and trembled in every limb. Sugden went and kissed her, and when he saw the two faces together he knew her, and such a rush of emotion, of wonder, of joy, of regret, came on him at once, as could not find expression in a wild, delighted cry.

Hour after hour passed on, and not a servant came near the hall ; Silcote had provided against that. Only very distant sounds came feebly on the ear ; the bloodhounds slumbered quietly around them ; a deep unutterable peace filled the souls of these three so long separated, so happily united, as they sat hand in hand talking in a low and gentle voice before the fire.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WE GET THE ASSISTANCE OF A CHORUS.

It is a common accusation against the English abroad that they herd too much together, and until they are very well used to it, will avoid the best foreign companionship and society for the sake of a third-class compatriot. It is, no doubt, somewhat true ; and it would certainly have seemed true, and been put down as an inseparable accident of the English nation, had M. Assollant happened to be at a certain great ball given at the Russian Embassy at Vienna in the very early spring of 1859.

It was a rather awkward time for every one ; for

the French Emperor's too celebrated "regrets" New Year's day, which have now become so celebrated as to be a little of a bore, things had been on from bad to worse. And although Lord Elliot had arrived in Vienna to undertake the what hopeless task of persuading two persons like peace, both of whom were bent on fighting, it was a more awkward time for the English at Vienna than usual, for it was notorious that three quarters of the nation had Italian sympathies, and consequently in the coming struggle wished Austria certainly, but wished Italy better.

The French also were extremely unpopular with the English that year, so that really our poor counsellors had not a very pleasant time of it in the Austrian capital, having a strong disinclination to speak to any one they met; and were more than inclined to get together. Of course I am only talking of the rank and file, of the quiet and non-italic travellers or residents."

These quiet people found themselves perfectly comfortable and safe in the society of two people known as English, and also as sound Austrians; of the smaller rooms in which these two people established themselves, seemed to have almost the appearance of an English court, of which they were the king and queen.

They were standing, and very close together. The man was a magnificent giant of a man, a little over forty, with a head of jet black curls, in a white Austrian uniform, rather highly-ornamented, with red gaiters, which set off his handsome leg to perfection, and boots, fitting also close to his leg, and easily reaching to his calf: a splendid figure, but such a splendid figure as that of the woman who stood behind him, and whose dress relieved his own well,—a tall, extremely handsome woman, older than he, but very like him, dressed in a sweeping robe of ruby velvet, and wearing on her breast a large stomacher of opals. About her neck,—as usual and as well moulded as the youngest girl's in the room,—she had a collar of pearls, and so stood in admiration, which she certainly got, with one ill-formed arm hanging loosely upon her velvet, and the other passing affectionately behind her companion, and resting on the cornice behind him.

"Who were they?" some outsiders and foreigners asked, attracted by the sumptuous grace and beauty of the pair who seemed so sought after as their untriumphal all of a sudden. "The Princess of Castelnuovo, and her nephew Colonel Silcote, of the Austrian service. Her late husband was an Italian renegade—a thousand pardons." "And who that exquisitely pretty little English girl, in light blue satin, who seems to be under the protection of Madame the Princess?" "That is the niece of the Princess, Miss Silcote of Silcotes, the great heiress." "What such effect spoke the foreigners. The English conversation of three gentlemen ran somewhat in this way.

These three men had got into a corner together accidentally; and were three rather remarkable looking men, though quite young. The tallest of the three was a rather pale man, with dark hair and very prominent features; the next in height was pale also, but very handsome. Both of these men looked some ten years older than they were, and spoke in a low and deliberate voice, like men who had been in some way tamed. The third of the group, who always touched the second, was stone blind. The first man was Charles Ravenshoe, the second Austin Elliot, and the third Lord Ed-

ward Barty. Charles Ravenshoe had met the other two here, and they were talking together of many things, and lastly of the Princess and her nephew.

"Who are these people, Ravenshoe?" said Austin Elliot, with a ghost of his bright old smile, "and why are they holding a court within a court like this? What the dickens are you doing in this room? Why are you here, sir? Eh?"

"Why are you?" said Charles, laughing. "For much the same reason as the rest of us. Because we feel guilty on the subject of politics, and wish to have the countenance of two celebrated Austrian sympathizers."

"Well, I suppose so. But, once more, who are these people?"

Lord Edward interposed. "They are most remarkable people. I wish I could see the woman."

"Why?" asked Charles Ravenshoe.

"Because she is a wonderful woman. I have been listening to her conversation, and there is an inconsecutive vacuous fatuity about it which has both astonished and interested me. What powers of lying that woman must have, with that false unmarked voice, and that false laugh? The woman laughs carefully in fifts. Don't she show her teeth when she laughs? And are they not fine teeth?"

They said, "Yes."

"A good guess for a man who has never looked on the light of heaven. Let me try another. She has either made mischief or will make it,—inconceivable mischief. Yet I should get to like her if I knew her. I think I should have guessed that her appearance was splendid even if I had not heard every one saying so around me. What is she like, Austin? You know what I mean, though I never could get music into your head."

"Like a solemn anthem of Purcell or Boyce."

"Tut! Tut! Like 'Pop goes the Weasel.' Charles Ravenshoe's wife would have made a better hit than that. False music there, but a kind woman. A little cracked melody, and no harmony."

"What do you think of the man?" asked Austin Elliot, looking at Charles Ravenshoe.

"Marseillais," answered Lord Edward, shortly.

"Knows how to die, but don't know how to live. Who is this little girl who is talking with them, evidently chaperoned by the Princess? A little girl, pretty I hear them say; weasel-faced, as I should guess, with a soprano voice. Might sing up to C in alto if her voice lasted, which it won't. Who is she?"

"The Princess's niece. The great heiress, Miss Silcote."

"Heaven help her husband," said the blind man. "What a fine mess she and her aunt will make with some one before they have done. Austin! Austin! where are you? I cannot feel you in the dark, and something evil is touching me."

Austin Elliot caught him by the arm at once, and apologized to a square-faced, powerfully-built gentleman in a court dress, who had accidentally touched Lord Edward's elbow. "Monsieur," he exclaimed in French, "was blind, and was apt to be nervous at the touch of a stranger."

Lord Edward Barty struck in at once in the same language. "Monsieur is not nervous. But Monsieur knows many more things than people who have their sight."

The courteous stranger passed to the rear of them, and Austin Elliot took Lord Edward Barty to task.

"My dear Edward, you were very rude to that man."

"I don't care," said Lord Edward. "I won't have *canaille* come near me. I live among and love working folks, but I will have no *canaille* about me."

"But how can you tell that he was of the *canaille*."

"By his touch, you blind man, if by nothing else. By his apologetic shuffling touch: but you cannot understand that. Then by his *smell*; perhaps you can understand that."

"My dear Edward, you carry your fancies too far. Your beloved workmen don't smell too sweet on the one hand; and, speaking of your own order, the generation before yours seldom washed themselves."

"I don't care," said Lord Edward. "I only assert that never since the Norman Conquest has any honest English nobleman, or honest English workman, contrived to smell of stale tobacco-smoke, brandy, and patchouli as that man did. But his touch, which you blind folks cannot in your darkness appreciate, was far worse than his smell. Austin, you can tell Ravenshoe that I do not romance about my powers of touch. Now let us hear more of this wonderful pair, who seem, from the conversation I have heard, to be Juno and St. Michael at least."

"I can tell you all about them, except what I don't know," said Charles Ravenshoe; "they live close to my friend Hainault's place at Casterton. To begin with, they are all as mad as hatters."

"You begin to get interesting already," said Austin Elliot.

"Everybody knows everything about these Silcotes," continued Charles Ravenshoe; "but they have erected a theory in their family, that nobody does; or, if forced to allow that any one knows anything, that it is like his impudence. Old Silcote, the Squire of Silcotes, is an absolute and preposterous old Bedlamite, who ought to have been in Littlemoor long ago, but he has an excuse for being mad. His wife was going on in a sad manner in Italy, and he went and fetched her back; and, after he got her home, she tried to poison him, and he found it out. She died,—about the best thing she could do; and he went mad,—possibly a good thing for him. That Princess there, in the ruby velvet and opals, is his sister, the most transcendent fool in all Europe. She married a Prince Massimo of Castelnovo, who, in 1848, not only turned traitor in the most rascally manner to the Italian cause, but went off with the young wife of one Count Aurelio Frangipanni, whom I know, and who, take him all in all, is one of the most perfect people in the world."

"That Princess there and her young husband lived a cat-and-dog life together over this business until he died; after which she sainted him, kept in mourning for him, spooned over him, and spoons over him to this day. She is a fearful humbug, that woman. Well, in consequence of this attempted poisoning business, and possibly other things, old Silcote refused to recognize her son, now developed into a Puseyite parson, and put that curly-pated, empty-headed bully, Colonel Silcote, on the throne of the Silcotes. But the curly-headed bully would not do. He was allowed a thousand a year and spent six. He owed ten thousand pounds and would only confess to three. He was asked to leave the women alone, and he promised that he would, and bolted with a ballet-dancer the week after. He would not do at any rate whatever; the more so as it was per-

fectly evident that he had contracted a *warrag* which was binding on him, and, rascal as he was, that he was not inclined to incur any of the penalties for bigamy."

"Old Silcote now put the Silcote crow on the head of his second son by his second wife, who I am informed by Miss Raylock, refused to visit him. If that is the case," said Charles Ravenshoe, "it is the only good I ever heard of him. He is an awfully narrow-minded prig of the worst Oxford man."

"The stamp of man who rusticated you, for instance," said Austin Elliot.

"Your remark," said Charles Ravenshoe, "is only coarse and impertinent, but falls wide of the mark. I am trying to enlarge your little mind, rowed into smaller limits than even its natural one by your worship of this new gospel of Free Love and Cobdenism, and you interrupt me with personalities. I wish to tell you about these Silcotes."

"You can't deny that you set the College on fire and aimed fourpenny rockets at the Dean's window. It was entirely owing to your evil guidance that a quiet creature Asoot got sent down, you old man," replied Austin Elliot.

"Don't chaff, you two, or at least wait till we're home," said Lord Edward. "I am bored here. I want to hear more about these Silcotes. Is Charles is an old ruffian we all know; we will get more of his confessions out of him, and tell Emma if he don't go on."

"Well, then," said Charles Ravenshoe, with a broad smile telling sadly of the old Adam speaking over his features, "I will. This Miss Silcote is a pretty little girl who stands there, shall we take her over the coals? She is not Miss Silcote at all, but Miss Anne Silcote. The real Miss Silcote is a Dean Silcote, daughter of the Puseyite parson, who is under a cloud with his father. The real Miss Silcote is most charming, good, and sensible; this Miss Anne Silcote is a vixen. They can't do anything with her at all."

"Is she the daughter of the man who rusticated you?" asked Lord Edward.

"Of Arthur, I suppose you mean. No, she is not the prig's daughter, and he had nothing to do with my rustication, which seems the only one of my good deeds which my friends appear inclined to remember. She is the daughter of another son who died. Arthur of Balliol is not married. He tried to train a girl to suit his imperial taste, and she nearly met his views. But when, after a year or so, he had brought his powerful mind to bear on the fact that she had not got any money, he pitched her overboard; and she, on her part, cut him effectually. Immediately after which she came into eight thousand a year and turned Papist."

"Bravo!" said Lord Edward.

"This Silcote property is actually enormous. Hainault, a very safe man and a neighbor of Silcote's,—from that reason knowing probably more of his affairs than the idiotic old Bedlamite does himself,—puts it at between forty and fifty thousand a year. Now it seems very likely that a considerable number of noses will be put out of joint when he dies. His eldest son and his eldest daughter he is not likely to recognize. That lady of an Austrian colonel standing there before you has tired his patience out by his dissipation and extravagance; Arthur of Balliol has rejected the crown, and has systematically bullied and insulted him. He has an awful tongue, this Arthur. The Oxford fellows who were—"

"justified for setting the College on fire," suggested Austin Elliot.

"I shall have to do violence to this man," said Charles Ravenshoe; "I shall have to fight a duel with this fellow."

There was such a sharp sudden spasm in Austin's face as he said this that Charles Ravenshoe hurried on, cursing inwardly his wandering idea.

"I shall have to beat this Elliot here, you know, Edward, or tell his wife about his impudence, something of that sort: I know I shall. I resume conversation where he so impertinently interrupted it. This Silcote of Balliol has an inexorable cruel tongue; I know something of what a man's tongue may get to by constant practice. I tell it to, if any man ever did. It was said of me that I went into Collections in my usual health, came out looking ten years older, and so gray, I had to send to Spicers for hair-dye. There is a nucleus of truth in that, though a small one. They say that there was never such a tongue as

And old Ray—I mean my informant—says he has used his tongue on his father so long, that the old fool has shown some glimmerings of reason, and got sick of it. So that the money can't go in that direction. We perfectly well know, however, in which direction it will go. The old fellow, having nothing to do except to swear at his horses and thrash his dogs, found a new amusement. There was a certain old school in London,

Mary's Hospital, and he, as a governor of it, being up with Arthur's 'Young Oxford' notions, it moved into the country, and made a bankrupt old blackguard, one Betts, treasurer of it, their head-master, and went so far in his iniquitous jobbery as to make his disowned son Algernon second master, as a cheap provision for him. And we what has he done to crown all? Why, picked out the brightest and best-looking of the boys in at school, and made him his heir."

I suppose that that is the sort of account which will be given of your affairs, my dear reader, even in the hands of such a kind and gentle being as Charles Ravenshoe, if you persistently decline to see the world, and make ridiculous mysteries about them, as did Silcote. And I only hope that you may get off so easily, but I doubt it.

A Frenchman had been standing close to Lord Edward Barty all this time, and actually touching him, but Lord Edward had not objected either to a touch or his smell. He was known to both Ravenshoe and Elliot familiarly, and when Charles Ravenshoe had done he nodded his head three times, and said,—

"These histories of families are very charming, but, I think, dull. The history of my own family would be very interesting, but also, I fear, dull; and in those portions of it which concern myself, I have listened attentively to my friend Ravenshoe. I understand English perfectly, and have gathered only the idea that the Princess of Castelnuovo yonder was concerned in the poisoning of Ravenshoe's aunt, and that his grandfather had left his whole estate to a boy from the Lycée. These family histories are only tolerable and interesting in novels. I came in here because I was tired of the continual *valetour* of the Austrians, whom we are shortly going to tie up in a bag and send northward; and since I have been in here I have seen more than you, my Ravenshoe."

"What have you seen?"

"While you have been talking of this Princess, of the bread and butter she ate as a child, of the milk and water she slopped on the floor in her early youth, I have been watching her face, and she has seen the Devil."

"By Jove, she looks as if she had," said Charles.

"Can you tell," said the Frenchman in a whisper, "the direction of eyes? While you were telling your stupid old story, I was watching her eyes, and I saw that she saw the Devil. Now in this corner, now in that? Which way are her eyes now?"

"Why, they are straight towards us."

"Then the Devil must be close behind us, unless we are the Devil, a theory which will not stand argument. Thou art no devil, my old foolish Balaclava dragoon, and I am only a devil among the ladies; not in practice, it is only a tradition of your nation about ours. Turn, then, and look at the devil behind us, who has so paled the Princess in the ruby velvet and opals. What makes your blind friend impatient? But there is a smell as of a billiard-marker."

Charles and the Frenchman turned together. Behind them was the square-set gentleman in the English court dress before noticed. The Frenchman laughed and said, "Hah! my friend, art thou this side of the wall, then, this time? Don't cross the centre of the bridge of Buffalora; the arch has given way somewhat, and the bridge might give way, and you might fall in the water. Strike out for the north side if you do. There are Italians, and may be other *canaille*, on the other side. And how do you find your trade, my friend? It is a trade which always has paid, somehow; and you look sleek enough."

The stout man seemed not over pleased at the recognition, and smiled constrainedly. The next moment he pushed his way between them, and advanced towards the Princess. She in turn advanced rapidly towards him, so that they met together somewhat apart from the other guests; and the Princess was able hurriedly to say, "To-morrow night, on the ramparts, opposite the Kaiser Franz Gasthaus," before she led him up smiling to Colonel Silcote, and reminded him of his name, which was totally unnecessary.

Tom Silcote looked on him with anything but good favor. "You are a bold bird, Kriegsthurm," he said in English. "Have you squared with the government?"

"I am in the employ of his Imperial Majesty, colonel. But my name is Schmitz, if I might be allowed to suggest such a trifle."

"All right," said Tom Silcote. "Do you know, there being no one listening at this moment, not even my aunt, that you are, in my humble opinion, barely wise in being here, now that you have declared yourself so very positively on our side. I wish you nothing but well, as you know, but I think you are indiscreet. I have seen faces about Vienna lately, which looked sadly like the old Democratic Committee business. One word is as good as a dozen to a man like you."

"I only ask for one word. Have you seen anyone who have ever seen before? Only the one word. Not another, on my honor."

"You shall have it on my honor. Yes."

Kriegsthurm still looked pleadingly in Tom Silcote's face, and Tom Silcote answered,—

"Could not do it, old fellow. Not even for you."

"Not the first letter, Colonel?"

"No. Decency! decency! If I had intended to

denounce, I should have done so. You go home early, and keep in the middle of the street. That is all the advice I can give you at present. You have made a great mistake in being here, and declaring yourself so decidedly on the Tedeschi side. You will not be safe from assassination even in London now. Remember the Waterloo Bridge business."

"One word, Colonel. Have you seen more than one?"

"I am compromising myself; the English are unpopular here, and I have not done much to aid our popularity. Well, then, yes. More than one, by my observation. More than three dozen, most likely. Are you losing your brain and your nerve, that you ask me such a question? Do you not know, — you, one of the shiftest conspirators in Europe, — that there is the nucleus of a Democratic Committee in every Hungarian regiment? You must have gone mad, old fellow, before you came here at all. Why the deuce did n't you stay in England? Where is my aunt?"

"She is talking with that long-nosed young booby, Ravenshoe. Time is precious, Colonel. I came here to see how things were going, and I wish that I had stayed where I was. I have made a mistake. England is the only place for a conspirator. I say I wish I had stayed where I was. Well, so I do, for some reasons, not for others. You ask me why I came here, and I will honestly tell you: because it is the most dangerous place I could have come to. The dear old fun of conspiracy is so dear to me, that I actually broke with the democratic connection, and with the Italian and Hungarian connection, for the mere fun of doing it, of coming here, and declaring for the Tedeschi."

"You will be murdered," said Tom Silcote.

"By whom?"

"By the democrats. Look at Orsini."

"He be blowed. *He* is well out of the way, and all his lot. I never encouraged him."

"You did not stop him, as you could have done."

"In our trade we never stop any one; we only warn. I warned him; he insulted me, and called me spy; and I let him go."

"At the risk of the French Emperor's life. My dear friend, there is such a thing as morality."

"So they say," retorted Kriegsthum. "I suppose there is. But we can't recognize it in our trade, you know."

"I suppose not," said Tom Silcote.

"A few words more, Colonel," said Kriegsthum.

"You are terribly in debt, are you not?"

"Pretty well."

"Aunt's fortune pretty near gone with it, I fear?"

"I don't know. She gives me plenty of money, and never grumbles."

"I do, though. And I'll tell you. Your aunt has not got above ten thousand pounds left in money to bless herself with; and you'll soon get through that, you know. But she loves you beyond everything in this world. You allow that?"

"Dear old girl! she does. And I love her, Master Conspirator, as dearly as she loves me."

"Does you credit," said Kriegsthum. "When you, loving her as you do, have finished up her money, you will have to begin on her jewels. And she has sixty thousand pounds' worth of them. You are awfully fond of one another, and love one another to distraction. How long would that love last if you were to ask her to sell one of her jewels for you?"

"Kriegsthum, you are the Devil!"

"Very near it, I will allow, thank you. I know your aunt, and your aunt's intellect loves you; but she would see you in Newgate rather than part with a single opal or a single yard of I suppose, also, that you know by this time her orable obstinacy. Is what I have been stating truth or is it not?"

"Go away, aunt. Politics!" said Tom Silcote. And the poor Princess, who was coming to go, went away again and talked to Lord Edward. He who afterwards remarked to Austin Elliot that woman smelt well, and that in ordinary conversation her voice was by no means objectionable.

"I will allow to you," said Tom Silcote, — which you say about my aunt is perfectly true, Kriegsthum, let us be plain. You are a great deal, I fear; but you have a way of invoking evidence which I never saw equalled. I can understand your power among these Nationalists and Democrats."

Kriegsthum laughed.

"I believe that my aunt loves me better than any human being, but yet I know that she would die of starvation, and see me die at her side, sooner than part with one of her gewgaws. Why?"

"Because she is as mad as a March hare," answered Kriegsthum. "You Silcotes, one and all of you, have just stopped on the verge of madness, and even she has not *legally* overstepped it. There are many such families; and they are generally. — I should say almost always, — brilliant and successful. It has not been the case in your family, I allow, because you seem to have arrived at that average when you are both too sane and too mad for success. All that is the matter with your aunt is, that she is the fool of the family, — the maddest of the whole lot. Just look at her, will you? Look at her fantastic extravagance in dress, and look at her curious investment in jewels. No one ever saw before such a quaint combination of extravagance and prudence. Of money, — and, indeed, of money's worth, — she knows little or nothing; but she understands jewels and her hoarding instinct takes the form of jewels. Her human instincts take the form of sainting her late husband (as bad a rogue as me) and loving me. But she would see you in Newgate before she would sell a diamond for you, and you know it."

"Well, leave my aunt alone."

"For the present," said Kriegsthum. "She is mad, and I have made a mint of money out of her folly. Such men as you and I, Colonel, need a mince matters together. We know too much for that. What I am driving at, as a practical man, is this. *She* will spend cash on you till it is all gone; but then?"

"I have my profession, and my position as an Austrian colonel."

"O if you swells would only speak out! Just once in a way for change."

"Well, then, I confess that, if I was reduced to my pay, I should have to live closer than I should like."

"*Pre*-cisely. Now, to prove that I am more of a business man than yourself, what will you stand, if through my instrumentality, you were installed as master of Silcotes, with forty thousand a year?"

"I think," said reckless Tom, "that I would stand a thousand a year."

"Good! That is what you would stand. Now what would you stick at, — murder?"

"I should stick at murder, decidedly. In fact, if

"Will gather the impudence to repeat the proposition, I will kick you out of the room, as a general future, not in the least regarding consequences. I confess myself an ass,—my life has proved it; I know you to be a great rascal,—your life has proved it. And again to turn the proposition over, a little better than a rascal, and you most assily are an ass, to have hinted such a thing to

"Who is the ass?" said Kriegsthum, scornfully. "There are but two of us here talking together, one of us is an ass, and it is not myself. You ask to me as though I proposed murder. I did nothing of the kind. I asked you only whether you would stick at murder to gain Silcotes. Would you? I do not believe that you would. See here, Colonel. I am getting old, and shall some day, when my vitality is less, get tired of the old political conspiracies. And they lead to nothing; at last to nothing I care about. I shall want a new career for my talents. If I can get you Silcotes, I will give you a thousand a year?"

"I should like Silcotes, well enough," answered Colonel, "but it is beyond your power. And, for this singular escapade of yours in coming to Vienna and declaring for us, you are safe nowhere."

"I will bet you," said Kriegsthum, "that I am back in London in six months, with the full confidence of the whole National and Democratic parties in Europe, if you like, in spite of my present indisposition and declaration. You don't know what fools these Continental Democrats are."

"Well, walk in the middle of the street while we are here. As for Silcotes, if you can ever show me that you got me Silcotes, you shall have me a thousand a year off the rent roll. But we are going to fight; and—who knows?"

"You are going to fight, Colonel, and are going to get beat. You will have had soldiering enough for this bout."

"Going to get beat, hey," thought Colonel Silcote. "If you ever spoke the truth in your life, you spoke it then."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE RAMPARTS.

It was a very calm spring night, and the ramparts were very quiet. The scent which came from the fast subsiding Danube was no longer the coarse, rough smell of mud, but the oxygenated scent of fresh springing vegetation. Nature was hastening to repair the damage of her winter's ill-temper; but certain trappings of sentries and guards more numerous than usual, and, more than those, the low, growling rumble of the wagons of the military train already creeping southward, showed clearly enough to those who had ears which could understand sounds, that man was about to begin his career of destruction as soon as nature was peaceful enough to allow him.

It was a wide rampart, from which you saw a plain, and beyond very quiet, peaceful hills. A very quiet and peaceful wind came quietly from those hills across the river, and raised a few whispers in the trees upon the rampart. The country there is not a cruel country. Nature is more than half kind; it is only plagued by kings and dynasties. The people are a quiet, law-fearing people enough, com-

ing of a good stock; and the land is a better land than one half the United States or nine tenths of Australia. But they are plagued by dynastic traditions, and so it is an uneasy land, and a land almost as ill to live in, for all its beauty, as Calabria with its constantly recurring earthquakes.

However, at this time of night the Emperor was asleep or dancing, and the gentle wind came peacefully and kindly from the hills beyond the river. It said nothing of the things which it had seen there, of the students who had defended that very place in 1849; nothing of the entrance of gaudy honest Jellachich; nothing of the midnight fusillades which followed it. It had never known, or it had forgotten. It merely wandered like a gentle hand over the face of our old friend the Princess, and said quietly, "Peace!"

And she heard it: low as her instincts were, she heard that. The world and her life had always been to her an ugly great confusion, which she felt, more by instinct than by reason, that she could not set right,—a confusion of hopelessly tangled iron cordage, with here and there a silver wire. She had always seized the end of these silver wires, and with weak hands, but with the obstinacy of a mule, had tried to unravel them from the mass of inexorable iron cordage which was too strong for her. In other words, she was a feeble, almost silly woman, who had been educated by waxy Continental politicians of a certain school not entirely unrepresented in our model country, until she believed that intrigue was strength. "Leave my aunt alone," said Colonel Silcote. Well, we will, when we have done with her. We must notice these things, however. She never knew what she was going to do next. There were two or three things in this world which she wanted done, and would fight to the death to get done. Beyond these things she had no policy whatever except this,—opposition: the putting of spokes in all kinds of wheels which seemed to be turning, for fear the circle should not come round in the way in which she wished it. Not having any intellect, and knowing it; only wishing for a few things, and knowing that also, her policy was obstructive. She denied everything to which she did not see her way, and only admitted the facts which would serve her small purposes provisionally.

The poor fool had been a child once, and was getting oldish and childish again now. She had always been blindly striving against some things she understood, and others which she did not, but only dreaded because she could not understand. She had striven, for instance, with the utmost persistency, in the saving of her own character, and had saved it: had spent her cash (while she hoarded her jewels) for Colonel Silcote; and had striven blindly and persistently against all strangers, and all strange ideas, lest the fact that she was the proximate cause of the ruin of her brother's life should in any way become known to her brother.

She had been always blindly restless, and now she began to want peace and oblivion,—an escape from all this miserable confusion which was getting deeper confounded on her day by day. Her case was very pitiable. Thirty years or more of her life had been framed more or less on a frightful lie, the full iniquity of which she had only learnt recently. She had spent the most of her money. Her terror of her brother's learning the truth was as strong as ever; and she desired peace,—desired to escape the consequences of her own folly.

Some escape and some do not. Half-witted wo-

man as she was, she had brains enough to see that some people, in this world at least, escape from the consequences of their own actions. She hoped she might be one of those lucky people, and she prayed for it. The Popish form of Christian faith began to have great attractions for her, as it had had for Miss Lee under very different circumstances. They promised peace, and she wanted peace. She had prestige and position as the principal Protestant lady in Vienna. But the Jesuits promised her greater things; and the Jesuits are good paymasters. They give what they promise. They give peace to fools.

She wanted peace. She had been fearfully indiscreet with Sir Godfrey Mallory, in the very old times, and she had allowed Kriegsthum to blind her brother, of whom she was terribly afraid, by innuendoes against Silcote's own wife. I have done my business badly, if you have not understood this before. This was a terrible crime. Poor, gentle, good Mrs. Silcote would have died from this accusation alone if it had been ever made to her. But she died a perfectly puzzled woman, entirely without knowledge or suspicion of evil. She had been very carefully brought up, and the idea of unfaithfulness to her husband was one which she never could have understood. And our crazy old Squire, the same dim suspicion of unfaithfulness had maddened him (as far as he could be maddened) at once. It was inconceivable to him, as it is to us, and as it was to Mrs. Thomas, when he told her of it. But he believed it, it was so well put.

By whom? By Kriegsthum, a man who knew the art of conspiracy. The Princess had trusted the whole business to his management; he was a thorough-going man, and she paid him well, and he went a little beyond his instructions.

His excuse to the Princess of Castelnovo was this: that his instructions were vague, and that he had to act on his private judgment; that something stronger was wanted to counteract Silcote's uxoriousness to his wife than mere vague accusations; that he took stronger measures.

She had always dreaded to ask him what he had done after she saw the terrible consequences of it. But a short time before, he, for the purpose of showing her how deeply they were committed together, had told her the whole wicked story, and she had fled from him in terror.

O that he were dead, or that she were dead! She was a kind, a very kind, woman in her way. The distress of others was unbearable to her. And now that she had at last realized what had really been done through her means her terror and distress were extreme. To-night, in this quiet place, for the first time since she had known everything, she had got into a softer and gentler mood. After a few turns up and down, she bent her head down upon the parapet and wept long and bitterly.

The gentle wind blowing over the graves of the piled thousands of slain at Aspern told of peace and rest in quiet country churchyards, where the dead keep one another solemn company through low whisperings of the summer night. How calm all those dead lay out there at Aspern, Austrian and Frenchmen!—

Her quiet and gentle meditations were interrupted, and her face grew hard, and potentially wicked again. Kriegsthum stood beside her.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THEY MAKE ALL KINDS OF PLANS.

"CONFOUND and confuse the dogs!" (it was something worse in reality,) cried out the Squire picking himself up from among them; "I am broken my arm."

He had not, to relieve the reader's anxiety. It that had happened was this. He had been going through an interview with his steward, studying and butler in his study, and had got into a most abominable temper with all three of them for an earthly reason. He had left them, scolding, as he had scolded so loud (gone away "hobbling and creaking," said the butler), that the bloodhounds had heard him coming, and had prepared to welcome him by standing and snuffing at the door by which they knew he would enter. Consequently the Squire, bursting into the hall in King Cambyses' vein, tripped up over the foolishest and boldest puppy, and came headlong down among three hundred weight and three hundred pounds' worth of useless and superfluous dog-flesh, and hurt his elbow. The dogs immediately licked his face; all except the junior dog, who was damaged by his fall, and boo-whooed away with his grievance into the chimney-corner.

"I wish the confounded dogs were dead," he said, raising himself up. "They are eating me out of house and home, and I am being swindled and cheated out of house and home. I have broken my arm, I hope. I should like to have broken my arm; it would give me prestige again. I wish I had the typhus fever; they would all come flocking back again fast enough then, to see about the will. I am perfectly certain that I am being cheated right and left by those three, but I can't prove it, and they ain't a bit afraid of me. I never should get a civil word from any of them now, even if any of them were here; but they have all run away from me. I have hurt that puppy, though. I must go and see after him. Ban! Ban! What is it, old fellow? Hang the dog, he is sneaking away! Go to look, you ungrateful whelp! Lor, how foolish I have been on the whole!"

"You never said a truer word than that," said Mrs. Tom's voice at his elbow. She had heard him scolding along the passages, and was advancing to open the door for him, when he burst in, and tumbled over the dogs.

"Hallo!" said he looking somewhat foolish; "so you are there, Madam Tongue, are you!"

"Here I am, tongue and all," she replied, "with a very ugly black crow to pick with you, Squire."

"Well, go on, then, and pick it," said Silcote; "you are all against me now. Go on. Scold yourself into quiescence, like any other woman; if you scold yourself into hysterics, I'll not raise a hand to bring you out of them."

"Don't be ungentlemanlike," said Mrs. Thomas. "I don't allow it. Keep your temper for your dog. I will have none of it."

"So you have turned against me, have you?"

"Yes, strongly. You have deceived me grossly."

"You are one of the most perfectly foolish persons," said Silcote, "that I ever met in my life."

Her own habit of "hitting out," retorted on herself so singularly, made her pause in answering. Before she answered he was at her again.

"You love to call me a fool. It keeps your tongue in order. But in my worst times I never was so foolish as you. I knew that you had come

is £4,000 a year some time ago, but I kept knowledge of it from you. I loved you, and I love you; but you have no settlements, and he could not marry you.

And he would gamble it away in less than a year. He is in the Austrian army, and — they are fighting to-night."

"Would not have him dead?" she asked, and walking rapidly up and down the hall.

"I only reminded you that he will have the ending of your money, and will spend it; and your boy will be dependent entirely on me, a half-fool and half-madman, according to account. You and your boy are, in reality, at mercy if you declare yourself. And then you are me, and make me dangerous."

"How often am I to tell you that I am not afraid of you. I see that it was in kindness to me that you practised this deceit on me, and advised me never to do the same. Well, I forgive you; let us be peace."

"I have no objection," growled the Squire. "I want to have any row. I act for the best, when I catch it. It is a grateful world, this. Let my servants do pretty much as they like, and I know I am being cheated right and

serves you right for tempting them. You had better leave this for a time and come with me, to see me in my work."

"What may that be?"

"Trying to reclaim my husband, and righting the wrong of your wife."

"Giving four thousand a year to a gambler to keep him, and disinheriting your own son. For, if matters are cleared up, Algernon is my heir. In such utterly foolish errand you are quite right to select the greatest fool of your acquaintance; and I am that."

"I am complimented by your selection, and you with pleasure."

"Had not you better go to bed for a few hours? Why?"

"Because you are in one of those fits of silly cynicism-temper which the folks hereabouts call your black moods." Try and sleep it off. Go to bed, my dear child, do; and I will put a paper of poppies under his pillow against he wakes, pretty good. Now, do go to bed, like a good little

girl. There must be some truth in some kinds of homeopathy, — though in this case the dose was any-thing but infinitesimal, — for the effect of her sarcastic scorn matched against his was most beneficial.

"The humor displayed on both sides was small, but neutralized his. He stamped up and down for a minute, and then, saying aloud, "Confound the woman! I would have disinherited Tom ten years sooner if I had known he had married such a girl," looked up at her laughing.

"He knew when she had gained her object, and then he stopped. She laughed also, and said, with a ghost of an emphasis on the "now" (she thought too much of a woman to forego that), —

"Now, my dear father-in-law, we will talk business."

"To which he answered, "I will do everything you possibly desire if you will only stay by me. I am not part from you."

"You shall not. Let nothing part us. My duty is to you, Silcote; but there are conditions; nay, my own."

"Let us have it."

"That we two do right, nothing but right, and

most inexorably right, in following out our bargain; and that we utterly disregard consequences of all sorts and kinds."

The Squire loitered into the porch, and she followed him for her answer.

"How splendid the crocuses are this spring," he said first; "and that daphne too, in full bloom so early. Do you know the scent of the daphne; the most rich, glorious, overpowering scent in the world, to which that of the magnolia seems like a grocer's spices? How do the storms and frosts of a bitter northern winter develop such a pure sweet as that?"

"Tolerable as a half-thought," said Mrs. Thomas. "Better in intention than in expression. Go, cut me a sprig of it, and bring back your answer with it."

He went, smiling, and did as she told him. He held the beautiful pink, rich-scented bough to her face, and as he did so kissed her on her forehead, and said, "I agree."

"Let me understand to what."

"To the righting of all previous wrongs without regard to consequences. To doing the right henceforth. On a condition."

"What condition?"

"That you are not to dictate exactly what is right and what is wrong without consultation with me."

"Well," she said, "I will agree to that for two reasons. The first is, that if you allow discussion I shall always have my own way, and the second is that the difference between right and wrong was settled immovably before Adam and Eve appeared on the Earth, and that you and I know the difference between them, which some don't. I have another thing to say to you."

"Well?"

"I wish to be very tender and delicate about it, dear Silcote, but I am a coarse and rough-spoken woman. I spoke roughly to you about it in my room at St. Mary's a little while ago, but I will speak roughly to you no more. We are allied. You wish your wife righted, and you wish to know yourself that she is righted."

The poor old fellow leant against the porch, and looked out into the woods for a little time before he answered.

"I think so. I think that I could bear the horrible burden of my most hideous and ghastly mistake better if it was demonstrated to me by undoubted evidence. I think so. I am a lawyer, and have been accustomed to examine evidence, and the evidence against her was frightfully strong. Your sentimental special pleading has done more than make me doubt; I have acquitted her often and often, but not always. In my darker moods I doubt again. I think that I would rather have it cleared up without doubt; so that she and I might stand clear, the one before the other: that I might ask her forgiveness with no cloud of doubt between us. In my present mood, while I am with you, I believe her to be an innocent, deeply-wronged woman; and I wish her proved so — in my present mood."

"But we are going to have none of the old moods, Silcote, are we?"

"None! None! But, you see the nameless misery and despair which the clearing of her character would — *would* be confounded — *will* bring on me. She was trusted to me, she trusted herself to me, and I murdered her. Can you wonder that I want your noble strength to help me

through? But I will go through with it—if you will only stay by me—to the death.”

“God help you, my poor Silcote! God help you! Do you never pray?”

“Not I. I pray? I’ll pray to her for forgiveness.”

“Could you not cast yourself on God?”

“I am too old, I expect. I did not begin soon enough, I suppose.”

“It is not too late.”

“You are a good woman, but women don’t understand that sort of thing. Arthur is the priest of the family. I had him bred for it. When I want a priest I’ll send for Arthur, and endure his tongue, which is a sharp one. I paid for his education as a priest, and I have a right to his services. I don’t like the amateur style of business at all, neither in law nor divinity. An attorney’s clerk may air his opinions before a police magistrate with success, just as you may have your amateur notions about theology. But Arthur has eaten his dinners, so to speak, and you haven’t. In either of the three professions of Law, Physic, or Divinity, I go in for the regular practitioner against the quack.”

“We must leave this greatest business of all alone, then, for the present, and trust to God. Now, have you any proofs? Will you put them in my hands? May I open this black box in your bedroom?”

“You may go and get it.”

“You are not angry with me again?”

“May God bless you, my dear. I angry with you? Go and get the box, and let us have it over.”

She went, and returned with a little black despatch-box. Silcote was gone when she returned, but soon came back, explaining that he had been for the key. It was a rusty key, not used apparently for a long time. He opened the box with it, and the box was empty!

They looked at one another for a few moments in blank astonishment, and then Mrs. Thomas Silcote burst out laughing. Silcote himself did not laugh, but looked seriously and sadly at her.

She laughed long and heartily, and when she spoke, said, “Laugh with me, my dear father-in-law, I pray you. There is serious work before us, which we must see out together; but laugh now at the absurd side of the business, just once in a way. You and I shall not have much to laugh at for a long time: let us laugh at this.”

“I cannot.”

“I can, and I’ll tell you why. Because here is the darkest, deepest mystery of all: this great Silcote complication come to an end in an empty morocco despatch-box with a morocco lining, and nothing at all in it. This is the *dénouement* of the great Silcote plot or mystery which has darkened and rendered useless your life for forty years or so. It was through this that you took to keeping your bloodhounds, now as amiable and as foolish as yourself. It was through this that you cut yourself off from society, and made yourself a marked man in the county, delighting in your evil name with all the ostentation of a real Silcote (*roturiers* as you are). This is the very box on which you told me the Devil danced every night as soon as you put out your candle. What a clever devil it must have been to dance on the empty box, while you were routing in bed, and maddening yourself about its contents!”

“Steady with that tongue of yours, my dear said Silcote. “Steady! Steady!”

“I beg pardon,” she said; “I beg a hundred pardons. I thought I had got it in order, but you and I have not as yet. My excuse is, that acting theatrically false irritates me, as far as I can be stated. Your life has been a theatrically false one, and I laugh when I see that it gets a little ridiculous in the end. Well, well. There is work before the pair of us, and I will curb my tongue: and will not laugh any more. With regard to this morocco box, on which the Devil danced, was in it?”

“The letter which accused my wife of trying to poison me.”

“Hah! and it is there no longer,” said Mrs. Thomas. “What a thing for a play! And this was this document like?”

“I will tell you something,” said Silcote.

“Do,” she said, “and I will laugh no more. The farce of the thing is over, and the tragedy is coming. You and I shall want all our wits. My old thoughts reappear in my nightly dreams, and always I see the white trampled under by the red and blue.”

“But the white will win this time.”

“No, no.”

“We ought to be there, daughter, if you think so.”

“We ought to be there, father, for I do think so. What is this ‘something’ which you were going to tell me?”

“About this accusation which was in that now empty box. It was clumsily forged to imitate my sister, the Princess’s handwriting. I always knew it was not hers, but I suspected she had something to do with it; that is the reason of our estrangement.”

“And of the bloodhounds, and, to put it mildly, of your behavior to society generally. If you had gone in for writing a play or a novel, I can conceive that you might have resorted to a ridiculous sort of mystery. As it is you are without excuse. Why did you not have it out with her like a man? But I am dumb. I promised to curb my tongue, and will.”

“At what particular period of the future,” growled out Silcote, “do you mean to curb your tongue? I should like to know, because, if you would fix the date, I would deprive myself of the pleasure of your company till it came due. If you will stop your tongue,—not that I hope for any such happiness,—I will tell you the remainder of my something.”

“Go on. I will be quiet.”

“Do. Well, then, my poor sister has stolen this accusation from me. She has thought that I believed that it was really in her handwriting, and she has violated my despatch-box and carried it away. Do you understand?”

“I do not understand. I am neither a novelist, a barrister, nor a play-writer, and I do not understand I know this. That you, who as a lawyer ought to have made all things clear, seem in your particular way to have confounded things more deeply. Your foolish sister has scarcely, with her active mendacity, confounded things more than you have by your foolish reticence. But we ought to go and see after you and I. A woman who could rob her brother’s despatch-box is capable of a good deal of mischief. You and I ought to go and look after matters.”

“You have sent for your cousin here, have you not?”

es. I thought it best. I can't trust you out of sight. Miss Lee comes to-morrow or next. Where is Arthur? We must not have a bag here. Is he really gone abroad?"

es, he is actually gone. He is really ill. Dr. — has sent him to Boppart. He wanted to go to his work at the school, but Dr. F—— would have it. If you and I go south, we must pick up by the way. Arthur irritates and bullies me, but I love Arthur and you better than any in the world. As for Thomas, your husband, my dear, he has worn my love out, as he did s."

I don't know that," said she; "there are some people so intensely agreeable that they may sin till many times seven. There are but few of them, you are not one; but I doubt Tom is."

A very few words are necessary to explain that legal recognition of Mrs. Thomas Silcote as Mrs. Silcote was easily made, and that Miss Lee received her cousin with open arms. Silcote had rather shy of meeting his daughter-in-law for a short time, in consequence of the little deceit he used towards her, and, when he did, there came an explanation recorded above.

CHAPTER XL.

UT, FINDING THEMSELVES RATHER COMFORTABLE, DAWDLE ABOUT THEIR EXECUTION.

"How do I look?" said the Squire to Mrs. Thomas, as they walked together up and down the hill, waiting for the arrival of Miss Lee.

"You don't look as well as I expected. You look nothing like a very pugnacious Quaker, and still are like a prize-fighter who has turned Quaker. The change is not a success."

"It was your suggestion."

"I am aware of it, but the cleverest of us make mistakes at times. They are not a success, and must be changed. Give them to the butler."

"They cost six pounds, you know."

"That is a matter of indifference. I will not care you look like a radical grocer. The old gray nailclothes and gaiters were better, bad as they were. You ought to know how to dress like an ordinary gentleman, but you don't."

"Go on."

"I am going on, if you will not interrupt me. I wanted you to look well to-day, and you are a perfect figure. When I told you to get a suit of dark clothes from your London tailor, I did not mean you to come out like a tee-total share-jobber. You look as if you had been dressed by a *costumier*, not by a real tailor. Did you get your clothes from Nathan's? You don't know how ill they become you. I take all the blame, however. She is nearly due now."

Mrs. Thomas had persuaded, or rather ordered, the Squire to dress himself in a way becoming to his age; and he had followed her advice. The result was such as she described it. She was possibly slightly acid in temper over this failure in her judgment; the more so, perhaps, because her law of inexorable honesty bound her to confess it.

Very soon after one of the Squire's newest carriages came whirling up the drive, and pulled up at the door. This contained Miss Lee herself. Her maid, her man (sedatest of men), her boxes, and the rest of her goods were coming in a separate spring-cart appointed for such purposes. In this carriage was only herself and a few of her more in-

dispensable surrounding,—such as her muff, her magazine (*Fraser's*,—*Macmillan's* had not yet beamed on the world), and a travelling-bag with gold fittings, for which she had given a hundred guineas or so, and without which she could no more travel than could poor Marie Antoinette without her ivory and rosewood *nécessaire*.

No more sliding in the streets now, Miss Lee; no more talking to the policemen; no more buying periwinkles in the street, and eating them with a pin as you walked along; no more skirmishing and fighting with the pupils. She had accepted her new position so cleverly and so well that it had become a part of herself. The real Miss Lee was the splendid heiress; the old boisterous governess was but a sort of eidolon, which had been allowed for purposes to represent on earth the real article with the gold-topped dressing-bag. Nothing remained of the old one but her splendid beauty, her old independent ways which enabled her to do without a companion, and a habit of looking somewhat steadily at any person, either male or female, whom she wished to examine, without always considering what their thoughts on the subject might be: which last habit made some folks call her bold-looking. These were the only remains now visible of the periwinkle-and-policeman period.

The Squire—who was a gentleman, or at all events believed himself to be so—was greatly to be pitied on this occasion. He had been carefully warned by his daughter-in-law that Miss Lee—whatever she *might* have been at one time, however much she might have degraded herself by being a governess in the Silcote family—had been born and bred a lady, and was now a very fine lady indeed. Silcote, with the continually-growing, sneaking consciousness on him of having made a fool of himself for nearly forty years, remembered that he had not met a lady for all that time in familiar intercourse. He had cast it over in his mind how he should behave to her, and had come to the conclusion that it should be the Grandison heavy father, with a dash of the fine old English country gentleman. He had dressed for the part, and had so far rehearsed the part as to put his hands in his waistcoat pockets, stretch his legs apart, and feel himself prepared, when the emergency came, to talk in a voice like that of Mr. Paul Bedford, in what is called, I believe, a "genteel part." He had dressed for that part under his daughter-in-law's directions, and thought that he could get through it very well, but just as he was, so to speak, going to walk on the stage, this faithless woman had taken all the wind out of his sails, and utterly ruined his nerve, by telling him that he looked like a prize-fighting Quaker: which might be true, but was not agreeable.

Still, he determined to go through with his rôle. Feeling as if he was dressed in his butler's clothes, he advanced to the carriage door to receive Miss Lee. And it may seem curious to an unthoughtful person, Miss Lee took him for his butler, looked calmly over the top of his head, handed him her hundred guinea travelling-bag, dismounted, and said,—

"Show my people where to put my things when they come. Take that *couvre-pieds* out of the carriage, will you? Don't let it go into the stable-yard. Are your master, or Mrs. Morgan, at home?"

For Mrs. Morgan was not yet announced as Mrs. Thomas Silcote.

This little *contretemps* put the Squire at his ease

and in good-humor immediately. Mrs. Thomas heard the dialogue, and joined in the joke.

"My master is at home, Miss," said the Squire, "as also is Mrs. Morgan. There are no further orders, Miss?"

"I think not," said Miss Lee. "My man is to go into the steward's room, not into the servants' hall. My maid, of course, goes into the housekeeper's room. That is all, I think. Where is your mistress, — I mean, where is Mrs. Morgan? Do these great dogs, which your master chooses to keep, bite?"

"No, Miss," said Silcote; "do nothing but sleep now. Sometimes they get the steam up sufficiently to bark, but not often."

"Drive them back. My dear creature" (to Mrs. Thomas who approached), "how are you? Make the butler drive these dogs away. And where is Grandpère le Terrible. And how is he getting on? And how are you?"

"Drive your dogs off, butler," said Mrs. Tom, laughing, "and come in, my dear. This butler here is a character, and we allow him all kinds of liberties. You must know him better. I assure you he is a character."

"He looks very stupid," said Miss Lee, not intending him to hear her; but he heard her, notwithstanding. His eyes twinkled with fun (excuse a worn-out old simile, it will serve our purpose), and he was going to say something funny, but did not, because Mrs. Thomas anticipated him.

"He is very stupid, my dear," she said aloud. "His stupidity is a plague to us. But ought you not to see Silcote?"

"I suppose I must. I dread it of all things, but I suppose I must, sooner or later. He has a dreadful tongue, I am told."

"He has a terrible tongue. It is a terrible thing to offend Silcote. Here he is."

Silcote came up, and bowed to Miss Lee. "Bless you, sir," she said, "I always thought that you were such a terrible person. I don't fancy that I shall be a bit afraid of you. I took you for the butler."

"My bark is worse than my bite, Miss Lee."

"He is all bark and no bite," said Mrs. Thomas.

"And I have a dutiful daughter-in-law, Miss Lee, who holds me up to ridicule on every occasion," said Silcote.

"And he has a tongue which does not always tell the exact truth," said Mrs. Thomas. "I never hold him up to ridicule, save when he makes himself ridiculous."

"Do you know," said Miss Lee, "that you two people seem to me already to spar a great deal too much?"

"We shall finish our sparring when we are both in the churchyard, but our love will live on," said Silcote.

"That may be," said Miss Lee, "but I don't like sparring myself. If you go on eternally wearing at the outside edge of love, you may get to the love some day, and kill *that*. I don't say that it will happen between such a pair of rhinoceroses as you two; I don't think it ever will. But it is a bad habit, this sparring. I am going to live with you, and I wish to say that you ought to leave it off towards one another, and certainly never try it on me."

"But we love one another, the father and I," said Mrs. Thomas.

"You do at present. You have not seen one another much, you know, and you have both had

your troubles. You have been thrown together at every chance of being hearty, mutual, and friendly for life. And I come here, and I have been ten minutes in the house before I find you warring your tongues against one another, to see whose tongue is sharpest. Believe me that it is utterly

"You speak well, cousin," said Mrs. Thomas. "Where did you learn this?"

"Have you studied shrewdness of tongue, or you have lost shrewdness of brain? I have lost you everything."

"You mean Arthur."

"I mean Arthur. I loved that man until he wore through the outside crust of my love. I showed him and flattered him, — what could I do? he was the noblest creature I had ever seen — until he wore through the outside crust of my love with his bitter sharp speech, the speech of the Squire, and got to the core of my love, a love which came from the admiration of his innate nobility. I can express it no better. My soul was his time; what did he do with it? Everything he was wrong was wrong without excuse: everything he did right was done from contemptible motives, which I analyzed in the bitterest manner. There is your daughter Dora and your granddaughter Anne. Is either of them fall in love with a chimney-sweep, or let neither of them fall in love with a schoolmaster?"

"Or a priest," said Mrs. Thomas, quietly. "My dear, you are talking too fast."

"Very likely: am I not in Silcote, where ever one says the first thing which comes into their head, and what is still more pestilent, *does it inexorably and mercilessly for forty years?*"

"You seem to have caught the disease of the house, my love," said Mrs. Thomas.

"So soon?" said Miss Lee. "How quick do the spores of folly fly! Well, I really think you are right. Suppose we try to be civil to one another!"

And the good-humored gentle girl kept this subject before her, and fought for it. There was some sort of tacit arrangement between her, her cousin and the Squire, that she was to stay on there. It was one of those arrangements which seem made by the instinct more than the intellect: I doubt if the arrangement ever got as far as articulate words. Yet something to this purpose must have passed between her and Mrs. Thomas, when the latter had presented herself to claim her moiety of the property. Probably they only fell in love with one another, as women do. But, when Miss Lee came to Silcotes, she brought an enormous number of boxes, and, after having heard that Arthur was ordered away for his health, put her servants in London on board wages, and sent for some more boxes. And meanwhile there grew in all three of them an indisposition to hurry themselves in moving.

The Squire and his daughter-in-law found out the very first day what she was. A gentle, genial, amiable, and clever woman, with plenty of character, and a most charming temper. Before the week was out both these rugged souls had felt the influence of her gentleness and her beauty, and ceased their rude words towards one another. They broke out at times, but Miss Lee, with her kindly laughter, laughed them both down. For what can the most radically rugged nature do against a splendidly beautiful woman, *beautifully dressed and jeweled* (that is not the least part of it, or *Sartor Resartus* was written in vain), who shows the geniality of radicalism with none of its acerbity? She was as radical and as uncompromising as either of them, but

never in the least degree Berserk. She and the old wild spirit was still in both of them, and she was always ready to break first, in Mrs. Thomas's times difficult to repress. She saw her before her, and she did it. She calmed and soothed them both. They had both, particularly Mrs. Thomas, far stronger natures than hers. She knew, and she knew that her strength lay in gentleness, and she used that strength, and did her best.

She still love the man who had first taught her to love; or, to put it in another way, she taught her to teach and train herself? Did she still love Arthur? Yes, not to make an Asiatic mystery of the story, she did; let her say she liked. But she knew Arthur's honest heart so well that she knew that he would never turn against her. She was ready to go to him. Only she waited until she could find out, by a side wind, whether his love for her had lasted. For she knew he had loved her once. He had behaved ill and selfishly to her, but she knew that he had loved her once. A woman, they say, generally knows when a man loves her.

Miss Lee had arrived at Silcotes on Monday. By that day her influence had been felt, and the other had got to love her. Still, there had been no quarrels, beyond some talk about their mutual aversion, which mainly turned on a conspiracy between them to deprive the lawyers of their natural rights, and avoid law. Silcote himself was funny in this part of the business, and was in favor of a friendly suit between the cousins, for the benefit of the lawyers. He himself, he said, would take the side of either party; and, give him his choice of terms, would, for a small bet, leave either of them or both of them without a farthing. He, however, ultimately managed the law part of their litigation for them most admirably, and secretly took the fees out of his own pocket. But in the first place he whetted his wits on them both, and a pleasant week they had of it.

On the Saturday evening Mrs. Thomas observed Miss Lee, "I have ordered the carriage for you to-morrow morning."

"The carriage! why?" said Miss Lee.

"To go to Marlow. There is no mass at Newby, and there will not be for all the next month. Father Thomas is ill, and—"

"Mass!" interrupted Miss Lee; "what do I want at mass?"

"My dear, I thought you were Catholic; I beg your pardon," said Mrs. Thomas.

"We call ourselves Catholic, certainly," said Miss Lee, "when we don't call ourselves Anglo-Catholic, which somebody used to tell me was only our ridiculous. I am not a Romanist."

"I thought you were."

"Nothing of the kind. I am what they would call very High Church, I suppose; and you are not innocent there. I am going to church with you to-morrow morning. Silcote goes to church, of course?"

"Silcote would see himself a long distance off, remarked that gentleman. "I may be a brute, but I am not a humbug. Boxed up in an apology for a sheep-pen for an hour and a half, and then hearing a man in a box talking platitudes which you can't contradict for another half-hour. No!"

Mrs. Thomas was preparing herself to go about with him on this view of the matter, when Miss Lee waved her hand and interposed.

"But you are coming with us to-morrow morning, Silcote," she said.

"Did I not say that I would see myself a long way off first?" he answered.

"Yes," said Miss Lee, "but then you know that involves an absurdity; because you know you could not possibly see yourself at a long way off, and you will come with us to-morrow morning, won't you?"

"To hear old Sorley's platitudes?" said Silcote.

"To worship with your fellow-Christians in the first place," said Miss Lee. "That can do you no harm; and, as for Sorley's platitudes, they are good ones. Old as the hills, true as the Gospel from which they are taken."

"I know more than that old fool does."

"Possibly. The greater your condemnation," said Mrs. Thomas. "The man is, to a certain extent, objectionable to me; because my formulas are High Church, and his are almost Low. But compare his life to yours. How much does he take from the parish?"

"Well, I have the great tithe. It came to me with Silcotes, you know, and it has been paid for."

"Not by you," said Mrs. Thomas. "What does the Vicar take from the parish?"

"£ 96 4s. 8d. last year," said Silcotes.

"And what did he pay his curate?" demanded Miss Lee.

"I don't know, and don't care," said Silcotes.

"The curate drives about in a dog-cart; and has got one of the Joneses for his groom. He is all right."

"And what do you take for the great tithe, Silcote?" said Mrs. Thomas; "and what do you give to the charities, Silcote?"

"O, hang it all, I'll go to church if you will only leave me alone. I'll go to church, if it is only because your superstition prevents your talking there. Every one will laugh at me, and the women will giggle at one another's bonnets. But I will do anything, if you will only keep your tongues quiet."

So Silcote went to church with them; and they felt, at least so Mrs. Thomas said, as if they had been leading about one of Elisha's she-bears, to dance in respectable places. But they got through with it, and the congregation were not very much scandalized, for he was the biggest landlord in these parts, and had forty thousand a year. At the Belief he sat down, instead of turning to the altar, until Mrs. Thomas poked him with her Prayer-book, upon which he demanded, in a tongue perfectly audible, and particularly well "understood of the people," as the Article goes, "what the dickens he had to do now?" He got into complications with his hassock, and Miss Lee's hassock, and used what his enemies said were oaths against footstools. He had got it into his head that it was the right thing to take an umbrella to church, and he leant his (which he had borrowed from his butler) against Miss Lee's. They fell down in the middle of the Litany, and he looked as innocent as he could, but kept one eye on the congregation, and one on Miss Lee, as if to say that this was not the first time that that young woman had done it, and that you must not be hard on her.

But they got Silcote to church between them, these two women; and knew that they had done right in doing so. But neither of them were inclined to try it again. It was not a success. After lunch that day Miss Lee told Mrs. Thomas that she looked ten years older than she did in the morning. Mrs. Thomas said that she supposed she did. It would not do, this taking of Silcote to church.

God sometimes treats fools sharply and sternly, — generally, if one may dare to say so, when they are worth so treating. Silcote was a fool, but a fool worthy of discipline. He got that discipline with a vengeance.

"We can't rouse him, you know, cousin," said Miss Lee, after Mrs. Thomas's church experiment. "We must leave it all to God." And God took it into His own hands.

"I wish we could get him away from here," said Mrs. Thomas, in a subsequent conversation. "He will never get quit of his old folly with all the ministers to it still round him; with his dogs, his horses, his carriages, his bloodhounds, and all the rest of it; the man will forget his only purpose in life, and remain as foolish as ever. I myself should become a perfect fool if I remained much longer in this atmosphere of perfectly useless ostentation, and I want to go to Switzerland and see after my boy. And this sort of thing is doing you no good, my dear: you were never made for the silly and senseless routine of a rich English country house."

"I don't think I was," said Miss Lee. "I could get on very well in London with ragged-schools, Sunday-schools, turn about at the hospital, district-visiting, daily service, and so on; but I can't stand this. This senseless, purposeless ostentation is too much for me. I dare say that all my work among the London poor arose from an artificial and unhealthy state of mind, craving for excitement. I will give you in all that. But at all events one *did* do some good."

"You did a great deal."

"Then a great deal remains to be done. But I can't stand this. I see no chance of organizing any work here at present, and yesterday, while he was in his best mood, he told me that he intended going more into county society, and proposed going to the Reading Ball, to begin with."

"That will never do for us, my dear," said Mrs. Silcote.

"It won't do for *me*. You and I are spoilt for that sort of thing. In London last year I was not introduced by any one; no one knew me or cared for me; but I had my little parties in Eaton Place, and Mr. —, caustic, shrewd old man as he is, told me that they were in his opinion the pleasantest in London. The people who came were all people connected with the charities to which I subscribed. The queerest people you ever saw in your life: but so fresh, and so much in earnest. You have seen society?"

"From the still-room," said Mrs. Silcote. "But I know it. They little think how we know them and laugh at them too."

"Well, I have not seen society, and have never heard anything about it, until I came here, and returned the visits which the people have paid us since Silcote has turned respectable. And I don't like it. It seems to me such ghastly folly. They talk of nothing but where they were last, and where they are going next. Lady Burton asks me if I am going to the Newby Ball, and, when I tell her, in the quietest way, that I do not go to balls in Lent, she talks across me to Lady Turton, about who is likely to be there, and so on. I don't like your society."

"*This* is not society," said Mrs. Silcote; "there is not a house within miles where you can meet a single person from the world. Believe the still-room: there are county houses and country houses, my dear. You must not talk of county society or of country houses here. There are neither the one

nor the other here. This is semi-detached society. *Some one* told me once that as a really country house, in a part of the country near him, he, arriving late, as a stranger, knew not of the people who were there; but getting a denial after dinner with the man who was his friend, whom he took for a brother officer, found he was the Secretary of State for Ireland and two other members of the Ministry were at the house. That is what society may be in the country. *That* is here you have seen."

"It won't do," said Miss Lee.

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Silcote. "My brother is rebelling against this style of thing. He wishes he was back in the Crimea, or even in India. And he is a very patient man. I have plagued him hard enough to know that. As you say, it won't do."

"We must get the old man abroad," said Miss Lee.

"Yes, if we can do it. He is a very difficult man to know."

"Well, at all events this won't do," said Miss Lee. "I have got into that state of mind that I should like to sell my travelling bag and give the money to the poor; that is rather a Colney Hill sort of notion, is it not? How on earth the man has gone on like this for forty years and kept out of Bedlam I can't conceive. However, I have a pilgrimage to make, and there, we must get him abroad. I shall not be long over it. How far is it to St. Mary's, and how does one get there?"

"Why do you want to go there?" asked Mrs. Silcote.

"To see my dear old master, Algernon Silcote, one of the finest gentlemen who ever lived. In old times, cousin, when you were no richer than I was, that man did all he could for me. He gave me all he could afford, — the wages of a housemaid; he gave me with it a delicate respect which he would not have given to the finest duchess in the land. Algernon Silcote's voice will never be heard in the world; he is a silent, long-enduring man."

"But you should have gone to him before," said Mrs. Silcote. "Why did you not?"

"Why did you bring me here? This foolish place, with its foolish routine, debauches every one: it will spoil you in time if you don't take care. I ought to have gone to Algernon Silcote before, but who can do their duty in such an atmosphere as this? I believe, much as I honor and love him, that I should not go now, if it had not been for a somewhat impertinent letter, from that very impertinent little daughter of his, Dora" (Dora was much bigger than Miss Lee), "telling me that he was not well, and would be glad if I came to see him."

"You should not have waited for him to write, my dear," said Mrs. Silcote. "If we have gained nothing else from the High Church people, we have gained the habit of examining motives. You have been to blame."

"I acknowledge it," said Miss Lee. "You are right. But you brought me into this atmosphere of frivolity and neglect of duty, and so don't you put that the blame rests on your shoulders after all!"

"I thought you gave us some remarks about what you called 'sparring' a month ago?"

"So I did; but you see how your evil example has told on me. Well, I will go at once."

She went at once. She was not long gone: only three days. Mrs. Silcote had spent these three days in battling with the Squire about the propriety of

ag abroad. The Squire, who was in one of those unaccountable moods in which men who act on impulse, inexplicable sentiment, do occasionally themselves, was enraged at her proposing to do very thing he had set his heart on doing, that he would be somethinged if he gave any such feminine folly. He wanted to know she was mad; she said she was n't, and he said he was n't sure about that. She said that, as she had observed, he was not sure about it. He asked did she want to insult him? that she would take time before she answered that. Then he asked her if she wanted to be mad, to which she answered that he did n't much driving. He asked her whether Berksociety was not good enough for her, and she said; that she had a foolish fancy for interchanging with reasonable beings. He asked her to deceive she wanted to go abroad for; she said, to clear his brains. He asked her was it not good enough for her, and she answered it was good enough. Then he reverted to his proposition, that he would see them all first, and immediately afterwards began to say whether he had not better get a new portrait.

He and his daughter-in-law, however, had no tongues going at one another in the very instant which Miss Lee had warned them. They were sitting over the fire in the hall, with the great dogs round them, when there came in a young footman who was James's friend, and stopped their sparring.

He showed plush breeches and white stockings, gray and brass buttons, with the Silcote crest on it if you could see it. The figure of the lad disappeared in this way, and on the face of the honest lad, undisguisable by plush breeches or brass buttons, or any other antiquated ostentatious non-whatever, the great broad word "disaster" shone in unmistakable characters.

Mr. Silcote saw it at once, and rose. The Squire, with his ill temper, and framing repartees for his daughter-in-law which he never uttered, saw nothing. The footman, with disaster written on his face only said, —

"You are wanted in the housekeeper's room, sir."

"Was it her son?" she kept saying as she followed the footman; but she knew it was not. When he got to the housekeeper's room she found only the housekeeper, her brother, and Miss Lee.

"Why have you come home secretly like this, my dear?" she said. "Something has happened; I saw George's face."

"Something has happened, and you must break the news to Silcote. That is why I came in secretly, and for you," said Miss Lee.

"Do you come from Algernon?"

"No, he is very ill? Is he worse?"

"Algernon is dead! Died last night. I got here too late to see him, and you must break it to him. — God save us, — James Sugden, go to her. She is going to faint, and she knows you best. Help her."

James Sugden was ready to catch his sister if she fell, but there was no sign of falling about her.

When Miss Lee told her dreadful news, Mrs. Silcote had put her two hands up to her head, and turned round. The only effect was that she loosened a great cascade of silver hair, and,

with that falling over her shoulders, she turned round deadly pale.

"Dead! and with that wicked lie burnt into his noble heart! To die so! And we dawdling and fretting here! Dead! This is beyond measure terrible!"

CHAPTER XLI.

UNTIL ONE PERSON AT ALL EVENTS GETS NO BENEFIT FROM THEM.

THE spring was cold, late, and wild. The north-east wind had settled down on the land, and had parched it up into a dryness more hard and more cruel than that of the longest summer drought. The crocuses came up, but they withered; the anemones bloomed, but could not color; the streams got low, and left the winter's mud to stagnate into zymotic diseases by the margin; the wheat got yellow; the old folks, whose time was overdue, took to dying, and the death-rate in London went up from 1,700 odd to 1,900 odd.

Death, anxious to make up his tale, in anticipation of the healthy summer which was sure to follow on this dry bitter northeasterly spring, garnered all he could. The old folks who were due to him he took as a matter of course. Threescore and ten was his watchword, and, for those who obstinately persisted in fourscore, he hung out foolish scarecrows of old friends younger than they who were dead before them; which scarecrows were in the main laughed to scorn by such of the old folks as lived in the strength of Christ and his victory.

He began to gather children with bronchitis, a sad number, — children whom, if you dare say anything on such a subject, had better have been left then drunkards, into whose rotten lungs the north-east wind had got, — men who were best dead. Then to the houses of ill-fame, where some slept and dreamt that they were picking cowslips in the old meadows, and awoke to find that they were dying utterly deserted, with only a wicked old woman to see them die. Then to the houses of the rich, driving them with their precious ones to Bournemouth or Torquay, and following them there inexorably, till the lately blooming and busy matron became only a wild wan woman, walking up and down, and bewailing her firstborn, or the rose of the family. Old Death made up his tale that month, and the Registrar-General acknowledged it in the *Times* duly; but he need not have gone picking about here and there to make up his number. Were not the French, the Austrians, and the Italians grinning at one another with a grin which meant a noble harvest for him? Could he not have waited two months?

And of all places to descend on, for the making up of his number, St. Mary's Hospital! "The healthiest situation," said loud-mouthed Betts, "in all England." Why, yes. A very healthy situation, but old Death came there too. The death-rate had disappointed his expectations, one would think, for he was picking up victims wherever he could. And he picked up one life which Betts and Dora thought was worth all the others put together.

The buildings at St. Mary's had never properly dried, for Betts's work was all hurried, — "Brum-magem," if you will forgive slang; and the lake had got very much dried up, and reeked a little at night-time at the edges. St. Mary's the New was not built on the healthiest site in Hampshire. If Betts had consulted a man with some knowledge of phys-

ical science, he would have learnt this. On those Bagshot Sands an isolated piece of undrained clay means scarlet fever.* Still, clay is good for foundations. Consequently this site for the new St. Mary's Hospital had been selected on an unhealthy and isolated piece of clay, which lay in the bosom of the healthful gravel, a little above the lakes. We have no more to do with it than what follows: a scarlet-fever tragedy in a school or a training-ship is not any part of our story.

It was the Easter vacation. Arthur, the headmaster, had gone away; and the rumors among the servants coincided in one point, — that he had had a fit, and that Mr. Algernon had "found him in it," and persuaded him to go abroad. Also the rumors coincided in the report that he had resigned his post; and furthermore, in the fact that Mrs. Morgan was not coming back any more.

The cloisters, the corridors, and the chapel were empty and silent. The ripple on the lake went always one way, westward, before the easterly wind, and the lake itself was low in the spring drought, and the bare shores exhaled an unhealthy smell.

There were no signs of spring to be seen about St. Mary's. Among heather and Scotch fir woods the seasons show scarcely any change at all, save twice in the year. The clay land, which will bear deciduous trees, shows changes almost innumerable. From the first beautiful purple bloom which comes over the woods when the elm is blossoming into catkins; through the vivid green of the oak of early May; through the majestic yet tender green of June; through the bright flush of the fresh Midsummer shoot; through the quiet peaceful green of summer; through the fantastic reds and yellows of autumn; on again to the calm grays of winter, sometimes silvered with frost and snow; — Nature in the heavier and more cultivable soils paints a never-ending succession of color studies.

And with the aid of changes on the surface of the soil itself; with flowers in their succession; with the bursting green of hedges; with meadows brimful of lush green grass; with gray mown fields; with the duller green of the lattermath; with corn, with clover, with a hundred other fantastic tricks, she, with atmospheric effects, makes these color studies so wonderfully numerous, that they appear as inexhaustible in their variety as games at chess; otherwise, what would become of the landscape painter?

But in these "heath countries" she only flashes into gaudy colors twice: that is to say, when the braken springs in the hollows, and where the ling blooms on the hill. At other times she keeps to the same sombre, seasonless, Australianesque coloring; sombre masses of undeciduous fir woodland, and broad stretches of brown heath.

Algernon, looking out of the window, said to Dora, —

"Spring must be showing somewhere else, in spite of this easterly wind, but there is no spring showing here. I don't like this place."

"I hope you don't," said Dora. "I should think very little of you if you did; but I console myself with the idea that I was right in thinking, from the very first, that you never would. I hate it."

"I thought you liked it at first, my dear," said Algernon. "Why do you hate it now?"

"We are all foolish sometimes, but I hate it now. It is full of boys, and I hate boys," said she.

"But the boys are not here now."

"I know, — but the whole place smells of it. And boys smell like sawdust when they are out in sufficient numbers. And this place smells dusty as ever it can smell."

"It is the smell of building, my love," said Algernon.

"It may be the building, or it may be the boys, but I know that I hate the building, and I hate boys."

"But you liked James Sugden, now, as it is called, James Silcote, and as it appears, your own."

"No, I did n't like him," said Dora, "I loved him, which is quite a different matter: and I love him still. Next to you I love him better than any boy in the world. And I hate boys."

"A good lad. But you never objected to boys in Lancaster Square?"

"There were not enough of them together in a pose. You could know them individually, as I liked Dempster, for instance. You can't know them here, and, collected together, they very much brutalize one another. The house in Lancaster Square never smells nice, I allow. If they had been long enough in it to make the place smell of sawdust, the smell of roast mutton from the kitchen — which if you remember was permanent, and to be put down by the smell of any other cook — would have extinguished it. But we never had to have left Lancaster Square."

"And why, again, Dora?"

"Because we have lost everything. Mr. Lee was tolerable while you were his patron; now he is yours his vulgar old nature is reasserting itself, and he is getting intolerable again. He is very kind to you, and I dare say thinks that he is now. I don't patronize you openly. And when I see him doing that I long to slap his face."

"My dear Dora! You are unladylike, my child."

"I dare say. Yet I was trained in my manners by one of the first ladies in the land. By Miss Lee, for instance, with her carriage and pair, and her grooms and footmen, and her house in Eaton Place, and her fallallallies generally. You naturally know that Miss Lee, at the time she was condescending enough to undertake my education, was getting herself taught chants by Uncle Arthur in the square in the dark, not to mention talking with the paragon man in the gutter; and had not as yet set up in the business of fine lady. I allow that you are right. She certainly had not. But there is no appeal from her now."

"You must curb that shrewd little tongue of yours, my darling, my only friend, my best beloved."

"Let it run one moment more, father, only one moment. It never told a lie, and it shall be dead as far as its shrewdness is concerned, towards you at least, forever. There is another reason why it ought never to have come here."

"And that?"

Out of her prompt little soul came her prompt little answer; though that answer was never given in words. In one moment she had remembered her debts and his failing health, and had determined not to say what was on her tongue. What was on her tongue was in effect this. That, having committed himself to extreme High Church formalism, he had lost prestige by retreating from an outpost like Camden Town, and coming into a scholastic society like St. Mary's, half, or more than half

* Diphtheria also and other diseases of that class; at least, so I have been told by a doctor who has worked among them for twenty years.

al in its ways, where he could do as he liked criticism. She, with her shrewd sharp little ant intellect, utterly disagreed with his con- about ecclesiastical matters (to make short of it); but she, like a regular little woman, her father having deserted the post of though she thought he was fighting on the side. She thought all this, but she promptly ined to say nothing about it, and held her, as far as he was concerned.

only said, "I suppose I am foolish in taking at for a walk, for your throat is very queer, u have been talking too much."

think you have done the main of the talking, e," said Algernon.

ever mind that. And don't get into that ed habit of arguing, and being sharp, and g words to mean what they never were ed to mean. Creation is divided into two classes, — Silcotes, bantams, and donkeys for the rest of creation for the other. Now I will you out for a walk, my dear, my best of all and we will get out of this brown desert, and ultivated land, and we will see spring together, te of the east wind."

ilcotes, bantams, and donkeys, are the first on of the animal creation, are they?" said rnon to Dora, while he was wrapping himself "You belong to the first division, my love." n every respect?" said Dora.

n every respect," said Algernon.

Come away, and we will find some primroses," Dora. And so they went away towards the nt fields and hedgerows, across the brown un- ned moorland.

o you want a harrowing death-bed scene? I not. I have seen too many to venture to de- ce one. Poor old Algernon came back to St. y's choking with bronchitis, aggravated by the cold he had caught hunting primroses in the ant hedgerows with Dora, and died. The last culate words he spoke through the choking ggm were these: "I must write a letter before I

and Dora, with grief and consternation in her rt, but with all her brave nerve about her, was a for the occasion. She put the writing ma- als on the bed, and, although he could not speak, mind was clear and his hand steady, until he ked and died of suffocation, leaving the letter her to read.

It went thus: —

"MY FATHER, — I used harsh and cruel words you once on this miserable matter of my mother's nor. I humbly ask your forgiveness. Believing you did the wicked lie, you could hardly have ted otherwise. But give the rest of your life to aaring the matter up.

"ALGERNON."

CHAPTER XLII.

HE CONFERENCE ON THE RAMPARTS IS INTERRUPTED BY AN OLD FRIEND.

WITH the cool breeze blowing from Aspern on er face, the Princess turned towards Kriegsthurm. She felt that in some way her silly scheming, — if it ight be called scheming, — so obstinately carried nt, was unsuccessful; and that Kriegsthurm, the well-paid minister of her follies, the agent in all her ily schemes, was face to face with her.

She had come to Vienna, believing that Kriegt- thurm was so deeply committed to the revolutionary party, to Frangipanni the Italian Constitutionalist on the one hand, and to Boginsky the outrageous Mazzinist on the other, that he dare not follow her into the lion's paws. She was quite deceived. His was a knight move against a castle; to go to whist, she had played the last trump out, and he had come in with an overpowering suit. Kriegsthurm was not inclined to let such an exceedingly well-yielding head of cattle stray out of his pasture; and so, on the strength of his being known to the Austrian police as the most clever, unscrupulous, and best-in- formed spy in Europe, he had made his peace with the Austrian Government, and followed his dear Princess to Vienna, with a view of "working" the Princess and receiving pay from the Austrian police at one and the same time. So much about him for the present.

"Madame has not served me well," he began, when the Princess turned to him. "I only say so much at present. The time may come, if Madame continues her present course of action, when I may say that Madame has served me shamefully and shabbily."

The poor Princess, softened perhaps by the wind from Aspern, began to cry; and to wish, strangely enough, but with a true instinct, that her very ob- jectionable nephew, Arthur, was there, or even old Miss Raylock, to confront this rascal. But she was all alone, and wept. So Kriegsthurm went on: —

"The time may come when I may have to say to Madame that it is hopeless for her to attempt to escape me. That I hold Madame in the hollow of my hand. That I love her she need not be told, but ingratitude of the most traitorous kind may ex- tinguish love. I may have to say all this at some future time; at present I do not. Madame has proposed this secluded meeting herself, knowing that she could not propose a public one; but she will see that I am all-powerful, and that I must be treated with confidence."

The Princess had not yet got through her softened mood, and was still crying. The fool got contempt- uous of her, of her, the most Silcote of the Silcotes, — "the incarnation of Silcotism," as Miss Raylock once said, who ought to know; and in his contempt for her he leaped too quickly to his first object, and began his business exactly at the wrong end.

"I want money, Madame. I am poor."

She wiped her eyes directly. "You always do want money," she said. "I wonder what you do with it all. But I have not got any."

"Madame has eighty thousand pounds' worth of jewelry. I must have some of that."

Had he not himself told Tom Silcote that very night that she would see him, Tom, deeply as she loved him, in the workhouse (or to that effect), be- fore she would part with a single stone? Yet this fool and conspirator (are they not now and then convertible terms?) proposed for himself what he would never have proposed for her darling Tom.

An Italian, one would have thought, would never have made such a blunder, and would never have made such a venture. But of what nation was Kriegsthurm again? It was a foolish venture, and the tables were at once turned for a time.

Kriegsthurm proposed to her to touch her sacred accumulations. The attorney blood which was in her from her father's side, and the old English land accumulative blood which was in her from her mother's side, alike rose in rebellion, to this de-

mand, fussed her cheek, and, strange to say, passed back to her brain, and set her wits a-going.

And she had been to Italy and seen the theatricalities, and could imitate them on occasions; as Master Kriegsthum will bear witness to his dying day. She gave him one instance of this now, and he never asked for another.

They were standing together under a lonely gas-lamp, which was burning steadily within its glass, in spite of the wandering wind which came from Aspern, and they could see one another's faces.

His was confident, bold, and coarse (to refresh your memory after so long, he was a square, coarse-featured man, with a red complexion). Hers was pale, thin, and refined, with the remains of a very great beauty. They stood and looked at one another; he, at least, looked at her, until he saw that she was not looking at him, but over his shoulder, at which time he began to feel an uneasy sensation in his back. Still, he looked at her steadily.

And her face changed as he watched it. The eyes grew more prominent, the lips parted; she was gazing at something which he dared not turn and face; gazing over his right shoulder, too, most unpleasantly. No one would care to have, say for instance, Lady Macbeth looking steadily over your right shoulder, while you were perfectly conscious that Malcolm's mishap was not your first offence. The Princess of Castelnuovo stared so very steadily over Kriegsthum's right shoulder that she had frightened him out of his wits before she tried her *grand coup*.

All of a sudden she broke out, sharp, shrill, and clear.

"Mind that man! He is going to stab you from behind, and penetrate your lungs. Mind him!"

Kriegsthum, with a loud oath, dashed alongside of her, and began his before-mentioned polyglot system of swearing. We have nothing to do with that, but something with this.

The Princess knew quite well that his life was not perfectly safe here in Vienna, and she had tried to frighten him by pretending to see a democrat, thirsting for his blood, behind him in the dark. She had intended to frighten him, but she frightened herself also a little bit. She never believed that there was a betrayed democrat behind him; she only wanted to scare him. She had only evolved that democrat who was to penetrate Kriegsthum's lungs out of her internal consciousness. Yet, when Kriegsthum had run round behind her for protection, they both heard that heretofore purely imaginary democrat running away along the ramparts as hard as ever his legs would carry him.

The Princess, though quite as heartily frightened as if she by idly and incredulously saying an old spell had raised the devil, was the first to recover her presence of mind. Kriegsthum, though a bold man, was as white as a sheet when he again faced her under the gas-lamp, with his eyes squinting over his shoulder. She began, —

"Ungrateful man! I have saved your life!"

"I acknowledge it, Madame. Did you see the man?"

"I saw him plainly."

O, Princess! Princess!

"Was he like any one you had ever seen before?" asked Kriegsthum.

"No," said she; "a tall, dark man with a beard." This was rather a worse fib than the first one, though she did not know it. The man had no beard, and she *had* seen him before.

"Let us have no recrimination, Madame. I do not even ask you why you distrust me, from me. For," he added, as his nerves quivered, "the spirits have told me that."

She was fond of the man, and had got a good hand of him through an accident. Evidently the man caused her to spare the use of her tongue. The revelations of the spirits had been so singularly unsatisfactory that even her spirits had given way under them, and were now among the follies of the past. She was left with him.

"Never mind the spirits; and I will tell you I run away from you. You knew everything about Sir Godfrey Mallory; and you knew, too, that I was innocent. My brother was so fierce and so strict that I feared his anger. Especially after Miss Raylock had got the power of her tongue to work about it. I came, and you promised to save my reputation. Then came to me, and told me that you had been making Silcote believe that Sir Godfrey's donations were paid to my sister-in-law, his wife. I remember my despair and horror at such a thing, but you pointed out to me that she was above suspicion for any breath to tarnish her name; and, indeed, I believed you. But my infinite wonder and consternation, the painful hold on my jealous brother's heart, in such open familiarity with poor Godfrey Mallory. I liked in a way, — you know what a fool I am, — at least your pocket does. I dared neither to hold my tongue. Her death lies at the door of my cowardly folly and your villainy. And I will be a ministering angel when you are howling."

One is allowed to quote Shakespeare, and put Shakespeare's words in her mouth. Her words were fiercer and coarser, for Silcote's sister was fiercer and coarser at times.

"Till very lately, Kriegsthum, I thought this was all you had done. The other day, when you were dunning me beyond patience for my money, and I threatened to appeal to my brother, you told me the old horrible story, that you had got my money by writing forged by some woman's hand, and that saint of wishing to poison her husband, and put poison in a place where he could find it. For the first time, I realized that you and I had ordered my sainted sister-in-law's body, and my brother's soul; and I fled here, where I believed I dared not follow me."

"Madame paid me highly," said Kriegsthum, "and also treated me kindly. My object was to carry out Madame's wishes most fully. And I did so."

There was a certain terrible truth in the defence of himself. There was a large liberal ground for his rascality which made him, without question, the greatest rascal in Europe. The general rule, I believe, in employing a rascal is to pay him his pay as soon as the villainy is complete. Such a procedure was utterly unnecessary in the case of Kriegsthum. Pay Kriegsthum well, and then all you had to look out for was that he would not, in his enthusiastic devotion to rascality, obey his instructions, and compromise you. What his real name was, or where he came from, is a question we shall never know. His name certainly could not have been Kriegsthum; even in the case of an arch scoundrel as he was it is impossible to believe that he would keep his own name.

would have been a stroke of genius with which we cannot credit even him. Dalmatian crossed with Greek might produce him, did not his German, almost Dutch, *physique* render such a theory entirely impossible.

Yet such entirely noble people as Frangipanni and Boginsky believed in the man; believed, at the very least, that if he was faithless in most things, he was faithful to them. Conspirators, often at the same time the most honest and the most credulous of men, are not difficult men to deceive. About this man there was a broad radical magnificence of scoundrelism which might have taken in some statesmen, leave alone conspirators.

"We will not dispute further, your Highness," he said, now giving her the title she loved; "I served your interests, and I was paid. I will begin all over again. I want money."

"And I have none," said the Princess, now perfectly confident. "This is a good beginning."

"But your Highness may get money again. What is your object in wanting money?"

"You know. I want it for Tom."

"Use your influence with your brother, and reinstate him as heir of Silcotes. I tell you, and I *know*, that there is no one whom the Squire loves as he does the Colonel. The Colonel is steady enough now, and has had his lesson. The Squire is quite sick of Arthur, and besides, Arthur has fits, and bullies the old gentleman. I tell your Highness that, if you and I put our wits to work, we can get the Colonel out of this, and safe back to Silcote before the French have crossed the bridge of Buffalora."

"Are they going to fight, then?" said the Princess, eagerly.

"Are they *not*?" said Kriegsthum, emphatically. "Do you think I don't know? Did I ever leave England before?"

"I cannot have Tom," said the Princess, "in a campaign, he is so rash and audacious. Can you save Tom for me? I cannot do without Tom now; I would part with my opals to save Tom. Kriegsthum, can you save Tom for me?"

"No harm will come to him, your Highness, believe me. He *must* go to the campaign; not only because his character is ruined if he does not, not only because he cannot avoid it if he would, but because one half of my plan consists in his winning back his father's favor by distinguishing himself in it."

"Give me your plan, then."

"I will," said Kriegsthum. "Now you must allow that the Colonel has a very good notion of his own interests. You can't deny that, your Highness; at least, if you did, your pocket would turn inside out in contradiction."

"I allow it," said the Princess; "Tom is fond of pleasure; and natural, too, at his time of life."

Tom was over forty, but she always looked on him as a boy.

"I do not exactly allude to his fondness for pleasure, your Highness," said Kriegsthum, "I only allude to his perfect readiness to lead an easy life on other people's money. I call attention *en passant* only to this amiable little trait in his character, to show that we shall have no difficulty whatever with him; that, if he saw any chance of being reinstated at Silcotes, he would give up his career in the Austrian army, his character for personal courage, his chance of salvation, yourself, or the mother that bore him, to attain it."

"Tom certainly has all the persistence of the family in the pursuit of an object," was the way the Princess complacently put it.

"He has. I asked if he would stick at murder, and he rode the high horse, and talked about kicking me down stairs; but he would n't; no more would" — he was going to say, "you," but he said, "a great many other people."

"Now, instead of trying to bring Tom's nature to your own level, my dear Kriegsthum," replied the Princess, "you should try to raise your nature to his"; which was pretty as it stood, but which, on the face of it, did not seem to mean quite enough to arrest Kriegsthum's line of argument.

"Now," he therefore regardlessly went on, "we three being pretty comfortable together, and I having to find brains for the pair of you, it comes to this. The Squire is very fond of you, and very fond of the Colonel. You haven't hit it off together exactly, you remark. Why, no; but nothing is commoner than for people who are very fond of one another *not* to hit it off. You and the Colonel don't always hit it off, you know; why, if he were to offer to touch your jewels, the dead soldiers at Aspern down there would hear the row you two would make together. I and my poor wife did n't hit it off together. She put a knife into me once, but I didn't think much about that. When I married a Sicilian I knew that I might have to attend vespers. But we were very fond of one another, and you and the Colonel are fond of one another, and you and the Squire are fond of one another, in spite of all said and done. And the Colonel must cheer the Squire's old English heart by killing a few Frenchmen; and you must use your influence with the Squire, and get the Colonel reinstated."

"That won't do," said the Princess, decisively.

"And why, your Highness?" asked Kriegsthum.

"Because, the next time my brother sees me, he will probably assassinate me publicly, and, if not, hand me over to justice for robbing him. Now don't look *farouche* like that, and, if you choose to swear, swear in something less than a dozen languages at once."

"I was not swearing, your Highness; I was praying,—praying for the safety of your Highness's intellect."

"Well, then, if praying produces that effect on your face, I should advise you to stop it until you have consulted a priest of your faith, whatever that may be."

"I will do so, Madame. Will Madame explain?" said Kriegsthum, coming down sulkily to the inferior title.

"Certainly. You forged a letter to my brother in my handwriting about this poison business. We need not go into that; we have had more than enough of it; and the mischief arising from it is only beginning, as it seems to me. My brother kept that letter in a despatch-box in his bedroom. I, living with him so long, and knowing his habits, knew that he had *something* there, but did not know what. When, only the other day, you made the shameless confession of your unutterable villany to me, I acted on the spur of the moment. I stole his keys, I opened the black box, I stole all the papers in it, and immediately afterwards met him in the gallery."

"Did he suspect?"

"No; but he must have found out now. I took all kinds of papers, mortgages to the amount of many thousands of pounds, as it seems to me; and two of his wills."

"Your Highness has committed a serious felony," said Kriegsthum.

"So I supposed at the time," said the Princess. "But it is not of much consequence, I think. I talked about his assassinating me, or handing me over to justice just now. I spoke too fast, as usual. He will never prosecute, you know. But our meeting again is an impossibility, that is all."

"I might prosecute," said Kriegsthum, "if your Highness returned to England."

"The idea of your prosecuting any one, my dear Kriegsthum! I don't know anything about law, but I know perfectly well that you are by far too disreputable a person to be believed on your oath. Off your oath you can be trusted, as I have often shown you; but once sworn, I would not trust you, and you know that no English jury would."

"I have been faithful to Madame."

"Yes, but never on your oath. I have heard you swear, certainly, in many languages, but you never took an oath to me. Pray, *par exemple*, to how many democratic societies have you sworn oaths, and how many of these oaths remain unbroken?"

"Your Highness is too strong for me. I wish to talk business. I cannot stand your Highness's logic."

"I am a great fool," replied the Princess, "but, like most fools, I am very cunning in a low way; and a fool must be a very low fool who is not a match for a thrice-perjured conspirator like you. You have ten times my brains, and ten times my *physique*; yet you tremble at every shiver of the breeze in the poplars above you. You would answer that I am a conspirator also; yet who is the bravest of us now? I am not so much afraid of a violent death as you are. Women are braver than men. Come, to business."

"I think I am as brave as most men, Madame," said Kriegsthum; "and I was not, until this moment, aware that your Highness was in expectation of a sudden and violent death, as I have been for now twenty years. If your Highness doubts my nerve, would you be so condescending as to allow me to prove it?"

"Certainly," said the Princess.

Kriegsthum was standing with his head bent down into his bosom, as if shamefaced at losing the scolding-match with her. He now said, without altering his attitude, "Your Highness speaks Italian as well as English. Will you allow me to converse with you in Italian?"

Again she said, "Certainly."

Kriegsthum, with his chin on his chest, went on in that language. "The Signora has challenged my nerves, I now challenge hers. The dearest friend of the man whom her late husband wronged so shamefully is standing close behind her; if you turn you are lost. I am going to seize him, and I shall have to spring past you. He does not understand Italian. I demand therefore of the Signora that she shall remain perfectly tranquil in the little imbroglio which approaches. All I ask of your Highness is, that you will walk away from the combatants."

The Princess, with her English nerves, stood as still as a lighthouse; Kriegsthum, with his great, powerful head bent down into the hollow of his enormous chest, as if to make his *congé*. But in one moment he had dashed past her, and had seized in his enormous muscular, coarse-bred, inexpressive fingers the cravat and collar of our old friend Boginsky.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"THE CUB'S" PROSPECTS ARE DISCUSS.

KRIEGSTHURM was some fifteen some, and Boginsky some eleven. The natural consequence of which was, that Boginsky came hurrying on in the gravel, with old Kriegsthum a-top of it. The Princess heard the hurlyburly, but, like a woman, waited to see what would be made of it. She did not hear the conversation which followed between the two men, when they lay on their legs again, which was carried on in a man.

"Why, what art *thou* doing here, and now in places and times?" demanded Kriegsthum, as he had picked himself up from the top of the laughing Boginsky, and was standing face to face with him.

"I was listening to what you and the Princess were saying," replied Boginsky, merrily. "A devil, but you are strong. You will face me boldly enough when he faces you; but you were frightened when I came *behind* you just now."

"I am afraid of your democratic commences," said Kriegsthum.

"You have reason to be so," said Boginsky.

"Meet me again in half an hour," said Kriegsthum, naming the place. And so they hurriedly parted.

"No danger after all, your Highness. Only an old brother conspirator, who may be useful to us. Now let us resume our conversation. What were the contents of these wills which you took?"

"I cannot say. Do you think that I would do mean myself so far as to abuse my brother's confidence? I burnt them, and a nice smell they made. My maid thought that I had scorched my boots against the stove, and I showed her a burnt glove to account for it."

At this characteristic piece of hopeless wandering folly on her part, Kriegsthum was very nearly throwing up the whole business in despair. Not a disgust, for he in his way loved the woman. He went on, without any sign of contempt.

"That is rather a pity. One would have liked to know. I suppose he kept two wills by him to show different people behaved themselves, so that he might destroy either. The one, if Madame will allow me, was probably made in favor of your favorite Thomas, the heir of his choice." And he paused to let her speak.

"And the other in favor of Arthur," she said.

"Excuse me. Silcote proposed to make him his heir, but Arthur refused, and they had words over it. No. The second will was probably in favor of James Sugden, a young man towards whom the Squire has shown the most singular favor: a favor so singular for him that there is little doubt that he is — forgive me — the darling son of your brother's old age."

"That cub!" exclaimed the Princess.

"I am glad that you consider him a cub," said Kriegsthum. "I have never seen him, and have doubtless been misinformed about him. He has been represented to me as a youth of singular personal beauty, of amazingly artistic talent, and of irresistibly engaging manners."

"He kept all these qualities carefully to himself whenever I saw him," said the Princess. "Yet still he was handsome, now I think of it and drew beautifully, and everybody was very fond of him."

"Exactly," said Kriegsthum, admiring the admirable way in which she contradicted herself, talking "smartly" one moment, and then letting her honesty, or simplicity, or whatever it was, get the better of her. "And this beautiful youth, born close to the lodge-gates, is desperately in love with your niece Anne, the Squire's favorite grandchild. It seems evident that one of the Squire's two plans is to foster a marriage between these two, and leave them the estate."

"If your theory of his birth be true," said the Princess, laughing, "it seems hardly probable that my brother, with his extremely rigid notions, should encourage a match between Anne and her uncle!"

Kriegsthum had never thought of that. He had merely an idea that they were in some sort cousins. I suppose that all conspiracies go blundering and tumbling about in this way before the time of projection. Judging from their almost universal failure, one would certainly say so.

"Besides, I remember all about this boy. He was not born near the park-gates at all. His father and mother were two Devonshire peasants, who migrated up into our part of the world when the child was quite big. And moreover my brother's morality is utterly beyond suspicion, — has not his inexorable Puritanism been the cause of half this misery? — but to whom do I talk? I remember all about the boy and his belongings now. His mother was a woman of singular and remarkable beauty: with a rude, ladylike nobility in her manner, which I never saw anywhere else. That very impertinent old woman Miss Raylock (who by the by was creeping and bothering about at the ball to-night) pointed her out to me first, one time when I was talking about the superiority of the Italian peasant over the English. And I remember all about the boy too. Tom and the people went out after some poachers from Newby, and this boy showed the most splendid courage, and got fearfully beaten and bruised, almost killed. And Tom — was it not like my dear Tom? — carried the boy to Silcotes in his arms, as tenderly as if he was his own son. He little knew that the ungrateful cub would ever come to stand between him and his inheritance."

As little, kind Princess, as he knew that the poor wounded boy he carried in his arms so tenderly was his own son. Once in his wild, loose, wicked life, God gave him the chance of doing his duty by his own child he had so cruelly neglected and ignored; ignored so utterly that he would not inform himself about its existence. Through his own unutterable selfishness, once, and once only, had he the chance of doing his duty by his own son: on that occasion he did it tenderly and well. Let us remember this in his favor, since we have but little else to remember. The man was not all bad. Few men are. Show me a perfectly good man, and I will show you a perfectly bad man. The challenge is not likely to be accepted, I think.

"Your Highness's reminiscences are interesting," said Kriegsthum. "This youth, this James Sugden, stands between the Colonel and his inheritance, and must be removed."

"What do you propose to do?" then.

"Wait, your Highness. I give up my theory of his birth, of course. I see that it is indefensible: so the original difficulty remains, don't you see? What is more likely than that Silcote should have planned a match between these two?"

"Nothing, I suppose."

"Of course, nothing. We all know that they are

his two favorites, and moreover they have fallen in love with one another."

"Excuse me once more," said the Princess. "This boy is not in love with Anne. He has the most extreme personal objection to her, to all her ways, and all her works. It is that mealy-faced, wretched little Reginald who is her adorer. This James worships Dora, Algernon's daughter."

"As if it mattered with a boy of nineteen. If his patron gave the word he would fall in love with this beautiful little niece of yours to-morrow."

"I don't know that," said the Princess. "He is terribly resolute, quiet as he looks. And she is a vixen."

"Your Highness is so absorbed in sentimental trivialities between boys and girls, that we shall never get on."

"They count, you know. And Dora, the Squire's other favorite, is desperately fond of him."

"I beg pardon?"

"I said that she was deeply, jealously in love with this cub."

"That might be made to work," said Kriegsthum. "Do you see how?"

"No," said the Princess.

"No more do I just at present," said Kriegsthum, thoughtfully. "Have you any remark to make, Madame?"

"I have to remark that you and I have got into a very idiotic muddle at present. I generally remark that an idiotic muddle is the upshot of all conspiracies. I have not been engaged in so many as you have, but I have been engaged in enough, and to spare: I can speak of the effect of them on my own mind, and that effect has been muddle, unutterable muddle: a muddle which I fear has got chronic with me. For instance, I don't at this moment know whether you want James Sugden to marry Anne, or Anne to marry Reginald, or what you want. If I could marry my brother Harry it would set everything right at once, because I could leave the property to Tom after his death; but then I can't marry Harry, and besides, after this despatch-box business he will never speak to me again. I see nothing for it but for Tom to marry Anne. She is a good deal younger than he is, and has a bad temper. If that could be brought about it would set everything right."

"But he is her uncle," suggested Kriegsthum, aghast.

"Lor' bless me, so he is," replied the Princess. "How funny that I should not have thought of it before! I hope we shall get out of this business without some one accidentally marrying his grandmother. There is only one thing more that I have to say, which is this: that I most positively refuse to marry anybody whatever, even if it were to save the Silcote property from the hammer. I had quite enough of *that* with my sainted Massimo."

"But, your Highness —"

"He and his Signora Frangipanni indeed. Yes. O, quite so. The little doll. Frangipanni was a gentleman: and he believes to this day that I instigated Massimo both to the political villany and to the other worse villany. It is you, Kriegsthum, who have torn my character to tatters, and compromised my name with your plots until I am left all alone, a miserable and silly old woman!"

"Is she off?" thought Kriegsthum, for she had raised her tone so high in uttering the last paragraph that the nearest sentry challenged. She was

not "off." She began crying, and modulated her tone.

"Madame is safer here than elsewhere," said Kriegsturm again. "She will remember the fearfully traitorous conduct of her late husband to the Italian cause in 1849. She will remember that she has rendered it impossible for her to go to England in the face of her brother's vengeance, and impossible to go to Italy in the face of the vengeance of the Italian party and Signor Frangipanni. She will then remain here?"

"I think you had better leave me," she said. "I am getting nervous. There, go. I will have no harm done to the boy, but do the best you can for Tom. Are you angry with me? You know that I have always loved you, and been a faithful friend to you. Don't be angry with me."

Kriegsturm was a great scoundrel, but then he was a most good-natured man. Many who knew a very great deal about him said that he was a good-hearted man. Probably his heart had very little to do with his actions. Most likely, lying inside that enormous chest, it was a very healthy heart, with the blood clicking steadily through it as true as a time-piece. In spite of his villanies and plots and scoundrelisms, he had some suspicion of what is called a "good heart." If one had said that some part of the man's brain was benevolent, and was expressed on his ferociously jolly great face, one might be nearer the truth. Anyhow, there was benevolence and gratitude in the man somewhere, for he knelt down before the foolish old Princess, took her hand in his, kissed it, bowed to her, and sped away towards his interview with Boginsky, leaving her drying her tears and looking towards the French and Austrian graves over at Aspern.

CHAPTER XLIV.

NOT MUCH TO HIS ADVANTAGE.

"THAT is a very noble woman," said Kriegsturm, as he half walked, half trotted along. "She is worth the whole lot of 'em put together. She is a fool, like the rest of her family, but she is to my mind the best of them. She complains that she has got puzzled about the family plot: suppose I were to complicate it further by marrying her? No, that would n't do. In the first place she would n't have me, and in the second place we should all be in Bedlam as soon as the old man died, trying to find out our different relationships. That young cub, Sugden, might turn out to be my grandmother in the *mêlée*. She has managed to turn my brains upside down; they must be getting older than they were, or she would never have addled them like this. If I can get a thousand a year from Colonel Silcote, this is my last plot; for my wits are failing me. I have debauched my logical powers and my power of examining evidence by going in for that wretched spiritualist business, the only piece of real charlatanism I ever did in my life. It has not paid, and I may say myself, as a very long-headed rascal, that charlatanism never does pay in the long run. The money comes too easy and too quick to stay by you. You put other folks off their heads, but then you put yourself off too. You cannot succeed unless you put yourself off your head and make yourself believe in it. And so you get to think that the fools are not fools, and even if they are, that the crop will last forever. And so you debauch your soul

about your money matters, and spend when you ought to be saving.

"It is the same with conspiracies," he was going on, when he came sharp round the corner at the place of meeting with Boginsky, and there he found Boginsky waiting for him; who, when he saw him, burst out laughing.

"What in the name of goodness," said Kriegsturm, laughing in his turn, "brings you into this wasp's nest?"

"Revolutionary business, my dear," said Boginsky. "We, in London, thought that, as all the troops were being poured south, there might be a chance for us. We thought that a democratic revolution in Vienna, in the rear of the army, just when they were hammer-and-tongs at it with the French, would produce a most unforeseen complication: as we live by complication and confusion, as you know."

"Now for a thorough-going fool give me a thorough-going democrat," said Kriegsturm, impatiently. "Do you think that, if you had a chance I should not have known of it? Do you see on which side I am? Austria will be beaten certainly, but in spite of that I have dashed against the circles."

"I gave up all hopes the moment I saw it," said Boginsky.

"And how is your precious scheme working?"

"Well! you know better than I can tell you," said Boginsky. "It will not work at all. The committees won't look at us. They say that the demolition of the fortifications has changed the chances utterly. I came here expecting to head a revolt, and all the employment I can find is a very dirty job."

"And what may that be?" said Kriegsturm.

"To watch you, my dear, and, if I can catch you alone and unarmed, — as you are now; in a private place, — like this; in the dead of night with no witnesses, — as now; to assassinate you. Which I am of course going to do this very instant, with this very American revolver. Therefore go down on your knees, and say your prayers at once."

Kriegsturm laughed pleasantly, "You have got among bad company, then."

"I have. The old breed of democrats is dying out, and are replaced by men who disgrace the name, like these fellows. These fellows are Obedient to a man. And what is worse, they have forgotten or learnt to vilipend, the great names of the movement: Garibaldi, Kossuth, Mazzini, Manin, &c. Boginsky, are sneered at by them as half-hearted men. These men, who sit, and plot, and dream, laugh at us who rose for the cause, and were taken red-handed. They proposed this business to me as a proof of my sincerity. I need not say that I accepted their offer with avidity, lest some more scrupulous democrat among them might take it in hand. You are in great danger here."

"I thank you, Boginsky. You are a gentleman. You yourself are in very great danger here. I think, from an answer he gave me to-night, that Tom Silcote has seen you, and if he saw you again might denounce you to-morrow. I must get out of this place."

"You must, indeed, and yourself also."

"We will let that be; for the present, you are the first person to be considered. Are you poor?"

"I have absolutely nothing. I have nothing to eat. I have no clothes but what I stand in. Will there ever a democrat of my sort who was rich? And I have no passport. As for passing the line

Italy, that is entirely impossible. I could get a ward, but I have no money."

You shall have money and passport if you will something for me."

Your money is Austrian, and I will not touch

You can pay it back."

Well, Jesuit! What is it then?"

There is a young English artist, one Sugden, at Prague."

Well! Do you wish me to murder him for?"

I wish to heaven you would. It is so terribly lucky, you're being a gentleman and a man of or."

Not unlucky for you, is it?" said Boginsky.

I am not sure of that," said Kriegsturm, "I getting so sick of the whole business, and more particularly of the Silcote complication, that I most wish you had followed the instructions of the democratic committee, and put a bullet into me. I don't ask you to murder him. Will you meet him, I involve him in some of your confounded democratic conspiracies?"

Teach him the beauty of democracy?" said Boginsky.

Exactly," said Kriegsturm. "Let him be in your sweet company before you make your escape. Introduce him to the lower democratic circles, such as those of Vienna, who employed me to assassinate me. Excite his brain about the matter (he is as big a fool as you, I am given to understand). Show him the whole beauty of extreme democracy on Austrian soil; do you understand?"

"I see," said Boginsky. "Compromise him thoroughly?"

Exactly, once more," said Kriegsturm. "He won't come to any harm, you know. He is an English subject. They would send the British fleet into the Danube sooner than allow one of his pretty girls to be disarranged. Will you teach this noble young heart the beauties of Continental democracy?"

"Certainly," said Boginsky. "Where shall I meet you to get the money and the passport?"

Kriegsturm made the appointment, and the night swallowed up Boginsky.

Kriegsturm's brains had been so very much upset by his interview with the Princess, that he felt little inclined to go home to bed without having arrived at some conclusion or another. "These Silcotes," he said to himself, "would addle the brains of a Cavour. And I am not the man I was. That Boginsky will do nothing, you know. I must save this cub of a boy out of the way somehow; hang him! I wish he was dead. If the young brute were only dead, one could see one's way," he added aloud.

A sentinel, to whom he was quite close in his reverie, challenged.

"Silcote," cried Kriegsturm, savagely.

"What says he?" said the sentinel. "Stand!"

"Novara! Novara! dummer kopf," replied Kriegsturm, testily. "Is he deaf?"

"Buffalora," said the sentry, sulkily, bringing his musket sharply to his shoulder, and covering something behind Kriegsturm, and dangerously in line with him. "You behind there, who are following the Herr, and have heard the passwords, come forward, or I will fire."

"May the, &c., confound this most immoral city,"

said Kriegsturm. "If I was only once well out of it! Now, who in the name of confusion will this turn out to be? Knock him over, sentry, if he don't advance. I am Kriegsturm of the police."

"He is coming," said the sentry, with his finger still on the trigger, covering the advancing man. "Ah! here he is. You are now responsible for him, sir."

There crept into the light of the lamp which hung above the sentry's box a very handsome, beardless youth of possibly twenty. The face of him was oval, the chin end of the oval being very long and narrow, the mouth well-shaped but large, and wreathed up at the corners into a continual smile, the splendid eyes not showing so much as they might have done from under the lowered eyebrows, nose long, complexion brown, hair black and curling, gait graceful, but obsequious. A young gentleman from the Papal States, of the radical persuasion, rather shabbily dressed.

Kriegsturm was round and loud with him in Italian, and ended by arresting him formally before the sentry, and marching him off into the darkness.

CHAPTER XLV.

— WHILE HE HIMSELF DRAWS TOWARDS THE GREAT RENDEZVOUS.

THE new world, the world of nature, in her larger, coarser, Continental form, first broke on our old friend James's mind at the Drachenfels, that first outwork of the great European mountains. The great steel-gray river, sweeping round the crags and the vineyards, and winding away into the folded hills, gave him noble promise of the more glorious land which lay behind. It is as common as Brighton now, but remember what it was to you when you were as young and as fresh as James.

It satisfied his genial, "jolly" young soul. "Let us," he said to the quiet, apathetic Reginald, "make a lingering meal of all this. Let us dawdle up this beautiful river to the Alps, and study every inch of it, until we have traced it to its cradle. Then we will descend on Italy, and take it."

Reginald cared little, so long as he was in James's company; and so they dawdled up the river bank, from right to left, sketching, painting, bathing, learning their German, and singing. They got enamored of the German student life, and essayed to imitate it, with more or less success. They were both, like all St. Mary's boys, pretty well trained as singers, and James had a singularly fine voice. From their quaint training they had both got to be as free from any kind of conventionality as any German could possibly wish; and in a very short time they grew quite as demonstrative of their emotions as any German of them all. They were a great success among those Rhine people. The handsome, genial, vivacious James, with his really admirable, though uneducated, painting, his capital and correct drawing, his splendid singing, his unflinching good-humor, his intense kindness of disposition, was of course a success; in spite of his, as yet, bad German. He was, and is, a really fine fellow, who would succeed anywhere, from California to Constantinople. But the quieter Reginald was a greater. He painted infinitely worse, he sang worse, he talked less, than James; but the Rhine people believed in him more. When James had dazzled, and positively puzzled, them, they would

turn to the silent Reginald, after all, and wish to know his opinion, believing, from his comparative silence, that he was the wiser; and Reginald, who had been hoping that James had exhausted the subject, knowing nothing of the matter in hand, would do his best, and be oracular and vague, which pleased them immensely.

So these two happy boys went up and down and to and fro in this early spring, as free as birds, as happy as birds. The snow was not off the Hohen-Acht when they first heard of the Eifel country. They must go, of course, at once, and went from Coblenz; though the ice was still floating down the Moselle, and navigation was impossible. They walked up that wonderful river-side to Treves, in slush and mud; enjoying themselves immensely, and making themselves remembered to this day by some of the people in whose houses they stayed.

Reginald mildly asked James on their journey whether he called this going to Italy to study art. But James said in reply, "Let me see the Porta Nigra, Reggy, and I will fly south as true as a swallow." And Reginald laughed, and trod on with him through the mud, until they had seen the Porta Nigra.

They got to Treves so early in the season that there had been a slight whisk of snow just as they entered the town, and, pushing through the narrow streets, they came face to face with the object of their pilgrimage, a vast black mass of (as it appears) the first century, just now with every one of the capitals of the hundred columns piled one above another, silvered with snow.

"Did you ever see anything like this?" said James, after a few minutes.

"No, nor dreamt of it," said Reginald. "We did right in coming here. In future, you shall lead and I will follow."

So they headed back to the dear old Rhine, through the volcanic country, looking by their way on lakes hundreds of fathoms deep, blue from their depth as the great ocean, yet lying in great hollows among smooth short-grassed downs, where the sheep were feeding and the lambs were crying. And they saw an eagle, and a wolf, and a wild boar just killed; and, having looked in on the Apollinaris Kirche, they quietly descended on Andernach.

Here they met a very old friend of a fortnight's standing. They had made a halt at Bonn of a few days, and had struck up a friendship, which was to be more than life-long, with several students there. The students among whom they had accidentally fallen were of course democratic. The "Cross" party at Bonn is as exclusive as Pickwater. Happy-go-lucky James and Reginald, after a fortnight's examination of the question, were quite prepared to be convinced that hereditary governors were a mere temporary stop-gap between the feudalism of the past and the democracy of the future. They did little more than bargain for Queen Victoria; at whose name the students took off their caps. As for the Prince of Wales, they gave him up. Among these terrible young gentlemen (who turn out the gentlest of beings as soon as they have a place and get married) they had come to the conclusion that Queen Victoria was the last crowned head which would be allowed to exist on the Continent of Europe, and that she was only permitted to exist in consequence of her virtues as mother, wife, and woman.

Then there was the business of the map of Europe again. These students had settled that, among other

things (much in the style of that Paris map which was in great repute among the *prudent* — has the man who made it committed any yet?), England was to have Egypt, but not allowed any further territory in Europe, being overwhelmingly powerful; Alsace to a *union* many; and all that sort of thing; but always land to be served first, and bought, and not interfering. Or again, she was to interfere to arouse democracy, nationality, and what not; they believed in her power then. Now that the Cross party have won, what is the use of this up old democratic nonsense?

Only our two boys believed in all this. And of the loudest democratic talkers of Bonn, who cloud about a duel, met them at Andernach.

This youth was more of a geographical and political radical. The form of government he might choose to adopt was a mere insignificant matter of detail to his enlarged and statesman's mind. So long as you restored absorbed nationalities, he was ready to congratulate Ireland or Prussia in reverting to their original form of government. This young man walked up and down the river with our two friends for an hour or so, talking the most frantic nonsense about the Italian business not unwatched.

At length they all three agreed that refreshment was necessary, and the German boy, cocking his eye over his eye, and breaking out with, —

"Mihi sit propositum
In taberna mori";

led them to a little *gasthaus*, taking care to insist on them that the landlord's principles were sound; from which James and Reginald concluded that it was a man not only violently disaffected towards the powers that were, but permanently disaffected towards any possible powers which ever might be hereafter. James's jolly humor made him half laugh at this kind of thing, but there was an air of mystery and adventure about it which made it very pleasant. He began to think that it would be very fine to have the prestige of belonging to one of these secret societies, more especially in such a very tickled state as Prussia. He followed his German friend, hoping to see some real Vehmgericht business at all events for once in his life.

The student made a sign to the host on entering, and immediately the host pretended, in the most patent manner, that he had never seen the student before, which interested and amused James, as it also did a Prussian police official who was sitting at a table drinking. Then they passed mysteriously into an inner apartment, and shut the door after them; and the Prussian official and the host winked at one another, and laughed.

"You are not going to trouble those English boys?" said the landlord.

"Not I," said the policeman, "but I want him."

"For what?"

"Duelling. He went near to slit Von Anselm's nose."

"Pity he did not. The ass will make out a political offence, and become a martyr."

"Of course the ass will. But he must slit the nose of one of his own order in future."

"True," said the host, thoughtfully.

The student led our friends into an inner parlour, and brought them up to a large lithographic print, before which he took off his cap, put his hands across his breast, and bowed. The print was well conceived and executed, and represented this

ria lay dead in her coffin. Kossuth, with a his cloak masking his mouth, was taking a well look at her face, before the coffin should be closed. At the head of the corpse stood the pale boy of Liberty, staring with a calm frozen face at the body, who was in the right-hand corner, with a distorted by terror and remorse, calling on the walls to cover him, and the hills to hide him. (In Georgey was comfortably at his own chateau, at work, with nets, pins, and corks, completing the most unrivalled collection of butterflies and insects, and perfectly easy in his mind. But we must not dwell on political caricatures.) The print was well known, and well executed, and our two boys were surprised by it extremely, though the sad fact must not be that they had neither of them heard of Georgey in their lives.

"Here he stands," said their student friend, the traitor, with the blood of the Hungaria choking the lies which would rise from his mouth. Georgey — Georgey," he was going to say, when a very quiet weak voice behind them said, "Erman, —"

"It was a strong measure, certainly, that of Georgey's. I confess I should not have been prepared to act so myself; but in the end Hungary will be better, and Austria no worse."

They turned and saw before them one of the ugliest-looking men ever seen by any of the three. A man with a face as beardless as a boy's, as old as a grandfather's; a face of great beauty, with large, clear, luminous eyes, and a complexion like pale wax, without a wrinkle. The face was not large, but well proportioned and beautiful; the carriage was erect and bold, yet very calm and quiet, showing physical weakness, as of a man recovering from a great illness. Having said this, he leant against the closed door, and surveyed them quietly and silently.

The German student took off his cap; Reginald red as though he had seen a ghost; James was the first to recover his presence of mind. He cried out, —

"My dear sir —"

"You will write out," said Arthur Silcote, smiling, "the first book of Euclid before to-morrow morning, and bring it to my desk at the opening of school. 'De tabernis non frequentandis,' you know. You have violated one of our statutes, my boy. What is going to happen to this young gentleman!"

The young German student was being arrested. The policeman from the next room had come in, and had "taken" him.

"What has he done, then?" said Arthur Silcote.

"He has been duelling," said the police.

"And has not 'Von' before his name," said Arthur, affixing the young gentleman was removed. Well, my dear boys, you seem to be getting into good company."

"We are seeing the world, sir," said James, laughing.

"One side of it, boy; one side of it."

"A very amusing side, sir, surely."

"Surely!" said Arthur. "When you hear a man use the word 'surely,' you always know that he is not 'sure' at all. That miserable tentative word 'surely' exasperates me. It is one of the wretched phrases by which a fourth-class press writer rigs his opinion. Don't use it again."

"I will not, sir. You are not angry with me?"

"Why, no," said Arthur, smiling. "I seldom ask great favors from people with whom I am angry, and I am going to ask a great favor of you."

James waited and wondered.

"I have been very ill. I have been deceived by the doctors as to the cause of my illness. They told me that my heart was hopelessly deranged, and that my life was not worth a fortnight's purchase. This has turned out to be all a falsehood. I am as good a man as ever, with a new lease of life before me. I have merely overworked myself, and I want rest. But this foolish falsehood of the doctors has produced its effect. I came abroad, leaving all my old friends, to die alone like a hunted deer. Mayo, at Boppard, tells me that I am to live, and stakes his reputation upon it. He has turned me out from his establishment to wander and amuse myself. Will you let me wander with you? This new life, the assurance of which I get from Mayo, has become unexpectedly dear to me. I did not fear death; I only *hated* it. Death always seemed to me, if I dare say so, a mistake. I never doubted for one moment the continuity of my existence; I never had any physical fear of the great break in it; I only *hated* that break. I believe that I hate that great, and, as it seems to me sometimes, *unnecessary*, break in my existence as much as ever: but Mayo, the great expert, has removed it at least twenty years. I have a new life before me. Can you understand all this?"

"Well! well! sir," said James.

"I was fresher and freer once," said Arthur, "than you are now. In the old times, when Tom and I used to go and see Algy at Oxford, I was as fresh and as free as any one. And Algy is dead, and Tom is worse than dead; and I *have* been dead, boy."

"Dead, sir?" said James, wondering.

"Ay, dead: to hope and to ambition, and to much else. I have been dead, my boy, in a way, but I have come to life again. Come, let us walk together, and spend the day. At the end of it, you shall tell me if I seem likely to suit you as a travelling companion or not."

"I can tell you that at once, sir. We shall be honored and favored by your company. I rather think that we are a little too young to do *entirely* without advice: have we not just seen our chosen companion walked off to jail under our eyes? I am very discreet, no doubt, — for my age; and as for Reginald, he is the soul of discretion and reticence. But we have made rather a mess of it hitherto, and there are heaps of things I want to know and can not find out. And you are all alone, and want taking care of. We will take care of you if you will take care of us."

"These are all kind commonplaces," said Arthur. "But give me a trial. I am all alone in the world; I have been very ill, and I am slowly recovering. I shall be a drag on you, but I ask you in charity's sake for your company."

James tried to answer, but could not. To see a man whom he had always regarded as a prig and a bully brought so low as this affected him strongly. Reginald had dropped away from them, and they were sauntering up beside the Rhine stream together and alone.

"Why are you silent?" asked Arthur.

"Because," said James, "I wish I had known you better before."

"That would have been of little use," said Arthur.

"As a fact, nobody did, except perhaps Algy, who is dead and gone. I was a failure. Try to know

me now, and it is quite possible that you will like me."

What simple James answered is not of much consequence. Arthur talked on to him, as the Ancient Mariner talked to the first person he could get hold of.

"The hatred of death—not the fear, mind—which has been hanging over me so long ruined and spoilt me. The doctors, in their ignorance, gave me warning that I could not live, a long while ago. They told me that I had organic disease of the heart, and went far to ruin my life. It appears that such is not the case. I am a new man again. What the expectation of death could not do, the removal of that expectation has done. Bear with me a little, and see."

James only half understood him; but he answered,—

"One thing is plain, sir; you want attending to and looking after; and I will do that for you. Our meeting with you is a great stroke of good luck."

"But you will want to ramble and range about, and I cannot do that."

"We can ramble," said James, "all day while you sit at home, and at night we can come back and tell you all about the day's work or the day's play. It shall go hard, between my sketches and my talk, if you do not enjoy the day as much as we do."

So he joined them, and they rambled away together southward through Bavaria towards Salzburg.

James was at first extremely afraid of the terrible inexorably-tongued Arthur. Then he was surprised and frightened at the great change in him; and at last got perfectly confidential with him, and actually went so far as to tell him one night that he had been utterly deceived in his estimate of his character. I doubt that James had been drinking the wine of the country.

"You mean," said Arthur, "that I am not the prigish bully you took me for?"

"The words are yours, sir. You were never either prig or bully. But you were so hard and inexorable. Now you are so gentle and complacent in everything. A child could not be more biddable than you are."

"Yes; but in old times I was a schoolmaster," said Arthur, "now I am a child. Did I not tell you that I was new-born? I have a new lease of life given me on the highest authority. Life with me is not so enjoyable as it is with you. I am twenty years older than you: I cannot come and go, and enjoy every flower and shadow as you can. Yet life is a glorious good, and death is a terrible evil: ah! you may make what you like of it, but it is the greatest of misfortunes, that break in the continuity. But what do you know of death? Death has been with me night and day for many years. He is gone now, and I am as much a boy as you are, save that I cannot enjoy the world as you can. Do you understand me?"

"I think I do, sir," said James, gravely.

"This perfect rest and absence of anxiety (for Algy is in heaven), combined with your kindly ministrations and attentions, are making a man of me again. Is it not so?"

"You gain in strength and color every day, sir," said James. "And yet —"

"And yet, you would say, my old temper does not return. Am I not changed, then?"

"You are your real self now, sir. That seems to be the truth."

"Let us hope so," said Arthur. "I am myself. But, with my returning health, the world is somewhat moving. The lassitude of my former going away; and I begin to feel a want in action, for something to stir me. I am south, James, and let us see this war. I am sport afield there."

"What war, sir?"

"O, you young dolt," said Arthur. "Give me the foot-stool, that I may throw my head. What war? Why the grand crash between France and Austria, the stake of which is an kingdom. I see how to enjoy life: to cast away careful ignorance on political matters."

"But the *Kölnische Zeitung* says that we are not going to fight," remarked James.

"The *Fliegende Blätter* may probably say the same," said Arthur. "Boy! boy! there is to be 'a great thing,' as the fox-hunters say. I am south to see it. You can sketch it, and see sketches. I want motion, life: let us go!"

"We will go, sir, certainly, if you really think they will fight, and if you are able for it."

"You shall carry me," said Arthur. "My horse is in the business, and on the winning side. Austria forever, in spite of all her faults."

"Which of your brothers is in the business, sir, asked James.

"Tom," said Arthur. "Heaven help the Frenchman who meets him."

"I remember him," said James, "a kind man with a gentle face. He carried me to Silcotes & his arms once, after I had been beaten by poachers. By and by, you were there. Do you remember it?"

"I do, now you mention it," said Arthur. "And you are that poor little thing in the smock-frock that Tom brought in in his arms. I never exactly realized it till now. How things come round through all kinds of confusion! My silly old aunt took you to bed that night; and you made your first acquaintance with Dora, and Anne, and Reginald. Well, then, it is settled that we are to go south, and see this war."

"I glory in the idea, sir," said James. "I have never looked on war."

"Nor I," said Arthur. "It will be a cold bath for both of us. The accessories will not be pleasant; but it will do us both good. A review on a large scale, with the small and yet important fact of death superadded; and a kingdom of twenty millions for the stake. A University boat-race, in which the Devil actually does take the hindmost. Let us go by all means."

CHAPTER XLVI.

ARTHUR DEALS WITH KRIEGSTHURM'S ASSASSIN.

ARTHUR, with his two pleasant companions, James and Reginald, went pleasantly on southward past Coblenz, past Heidelberg, Stuttgart, to Munich, where perforce there was a little delay. Arthur was for pushing on as quickly as possible, and indeed grumbled good-humoredly at being taken so far eastward at all; but the boys were too strong for him. They had made the acquaintance of Kaulbach at the Apollinaris Kirche, and also in the Cathedral windows at Cologne; and they were determined to go to the home of the man whom, after Landseer and Tenniel, they placed as the greatest living master in Europe. They talked Kaulbach,

tated him, Arthur, with a calm smile always
face, laughing at them, and measuring their
figures with an inexorable pair of compasses
he had, greatly to their discomfort.

"You can draw the human figure correctly and
at thirty, boys," he used to say, "you will be
do as much as any Englishman, save six, can.
ce and work first; freedom afterwards. Never-
go it! This man's right leg is longer than
t, but it will shorten in time. There are men
top of the tree who can't for the life of them
a man's legs of the same length. So go it.
knows what you may do by hard work? You
be able to draw as well as a fourth-class French-
some day. Go it!"

ey were thoroughly happy these three on this
ey, and they took notes of one another to
mutual surprise.

thur took note of James, and came to the con-
on that James was the finest lad of his age he
ever met. "It is not his personal beauty," he
ed, "because, as a rule, handsome boys are a
el of useless nuisances. It is not that he is a
er and brilliant boy, because in the first place
not particularly either of those things; and if
vas, clever and brilliant boys are more utterly in-
rable nuisances than handsome ones. It is not
he is amiable. Amiable boys are as great a pest
ny kind of boy; they are always in debt and in
apes, and, what is worst of all, popular; and a
ular boy will ruin the best school in England.
d you never get rid of them by scholarships or
ibitions; they hang on your hands till they are
enty; and, when old Father Time gets rid of them
you at last, they leave their personal habits be-
ad them as school traditions: Old Tom and Old
b in these days are quoted as precedents in the
inagement of the school. There is the memory
a popular boy to put a spoke in every new wheel
u try to set turning. If I ever went schoolmaster-
g again, I would keep no boy after seventeen, and
ould write to any boy's father as soon as I saw that
was getting popular. This boy Sugden has de-
ached that school; and I don't at all wonder at
t, for he is really the finest fellow of his age I ever
et. He will be quoted against the new head-
master, whoever he may be, with effect. I don't
now what there is about the lad; I suppose he is
ood."

Arthur, of course, never dreamt that he was his
own nephew: only four people knew that as yet.
May I call the reader's attention to this fact? — Sil-
cote's extremely slight attentions to James had all
taken place before Silcote knew that James was his
own grandson. Rumor, dealing with an unac-
countable man like the Squire, had developed these
few growling attentions into a theory that Silcote
would make him his heir. Lord Hainault, surely a
safe man, entirely believed this preposterous fiction.
To worship properly the goddess Fama you must
live in the country. She gets pretty well worshipped
in town, at clubs and in drawing-rooms; but her
temples are in the counties.

"Reginald," mused Arthur further, "is an ass.
The only redeeming point in him is his respect and
love for this peasant-boy James. And the most un-
fortunate part of the business is, that, now dear old
Algy is dead, it is more than probable that Reginald
will be made heir. And he will marry that silly
little brimstone Anne. Confound it! all the property
shan't go like that. There has been sin enough
and bother enough in getting it together and keep-

ing it together. There is some sentimental feeling
my father has toward Algy's mother, which will come
into play now the dear old boy is dead. And he
will leave everything to Reginald on condition of
his marrying Anne. I wish to Heaven that this
James Sugden was a Silcote and heir.

"But I will not stand this," he added aloud,
rising up and pacing the fifth room of their long
suite of apartments at Munich. "No," he went on,
throwing open the door and bursting into the fourth
room, — "I will be heir myself sooner. He offered
the place to me once. I will hold him to his bar-
gain."

Kriegsturm and the Princess never were further
at sea than he was just now. His wits were some-
what got together by noticing that James was sitting
upon the floor, and his painting tools were scattered
far and wide.

"What is the matter, James?" he asked. "Why,
I was just thinking of you!"

"I should hardly have thought it, sir," said James,
laughing. "You have knocked me and my ap-
paratus over so cleverly that I should have thought
that you were thinking of some one else."

"Did I knock you over?" asked Arthur, ear-
nestly.

"Well, with the assistance of the door you did,
sir."

"I am extremely sorry, my dear boy," said Ar-
thur, anxiously. "I was in hopes that these fits of
half-unconscious absence were entirely gone; but I
am getting the better of them, decidedly. This must
be the very last of them. Let me help you to pick
up your paints. You should not have sat so near
the door, and I should not have opened it so quickly.
We were both in the wrong."

"I sat there for the light, sir."

"Then you are in the right and I am in the wrong.
I will make amends. I consent to go to Salzburg
without further opposition: out of our way as it is."

"You are very kind, sir. I *did* want to see it so
much."

James on his part noticed with wonder several
things about Arthur. His irritability was gone;
that was the first thing. Moreover, he never dic-
tated, but consulted quietly with James, sometimes
even with Reginald, and yielded easily. His old
rapid vivacious activity had given place to a quiet
contemplative habit of body and mind. He was,
for the first time in his life, tolerant of inactivity,
and seemed to like it. He was tolerant of trifles, —
nay, began to be interested in them. James, for in-
stance, got himself a wonderful waistcoat at Munich,
which had to be altered, and Arthur took the deep-
est interest in the alteration. He began to talk to
casual people at the *cafés*, and found them out to be
the most wonderful people ever seen or heard of.
He told James that gardening was a neglected art,
and that he should certainly take it in hand as soon
as he got to England again; bought Reine Mar-
guerite and stock seeds, and packed them off to Sil-
cotes to the gardener, with many directions, regard-
less of expense. He was going to learn to paint
(under James's directions), he was going to shoot,
he was going to fish, all quietly and in good time,
with the best advice (as he was before he went to
Boppard, he would have consulted Blaine's "Encyclo-
pædia" over night, and ridden a steeplechase next
morning). At present his principal employment
was the learning of military tactics, because "James
had promised to take him to the war."

A change indeed; but what wonder? He was a

man of keen vivacious intellect, with as much wish to enjoy life as he had when he used to run with the boats at Oxford years ago, when he, and Algy, and Tom were young and innocent. The doctors had condemned him to death; and he had got his reprieve. He was young, and had begun once more to love life and what life can give most dearly; and that new-found love had softened and changed him. James was painting away finely one day. Piloty and Kaulbach were to look to their laurels. The son of Mrs. Tom Silcote was not likely to be balked by want of audacity or tiresome attention to such little matters as correct drawing. In three close days James had produced a really fine historical picture (barring drawbacks, such for instance as that no dealer would have given five pounds for it, and that all the legs and arms were odd ones). There was no sky; but the Roman amphitheatre, with tier after tier of almost innumerable spectators, was piled up to the top of the canvas. Close to you, divided from the arena by a deep space of boarding, lolled the Roman Emperor; fat, gross, and in purple, looking with a lazy drunken leer at what was passing in the scene below in the foreground. Behind him was dandy Petronius smoothing his beard, and looking at nothing; and others, not to be mentioned here, but with whom every schoolboy who has handled Lemprière, the first book generally put into his hand, is perfectly familiar. In the extreme foreground of this picture of James's were two boys, Christians, condemned to the lions, one about eighteen, the other about sixteen. The elder, with a short sword drawn back behind his hip, was looking at you, with parted lips, ready for battle, while his brother cowered behind him in utter ghastly terror. Between you and them, on the sand, was the shadow of a crouching lion. You were the lion: despair and terror were close to you in these handsome lads; above them were the unutterable luxury and vice described by Suetonius (if he lies not) in the person of the Emperor and Sporus; beyond, tier after tier, the wicked, cruel Old World, which exists now only in Spain, and in the colonies of the Latin races which still exist in America, and which, since the failure of the Mexican expedition, seem happily in an evil case.

"That is very fine," said Arthur. "I give you credit for great genius. Piloty would have drawn better, but he could not have conceived better. Will you give me this?"

"Of course I will, sir, heartily."

"Now for some flake white and megilp; Roberson's medium, hey? Well, I am agreeable." And so, with flake white and Roberson's medium, he daubed the whole thing out.

"It was hardly such a 'bung' as to deserve that, sir," said James, quietly.

"It was no 'bung,'" said Arthur; "only try another subject next time."

"I learnt that at school, sir."

"Then forget it. You would never have attempted this picture if you had not come to Munich. Let us go on to Salzburg at once, and get your foolish wish accomplished there. After that, mind, we go inexorably southwestward."

"I will follow you, sir."

"Change the conversation. What do you like best?"

James, very much alarmed after the destruction of his picture lest the old Arthur should have returned, and the new Arthur have been only a deceiving fiend sent to lure him to his destruction, replied,—

"That is a very difficult question to answer."

"But you can answer it, surely, my boy. I asked for what you liked best; surely you can answer that."

"Well," said James, speaking to the new Arthur, "I consider Mayduke cherries as fine as any. Speaking about this part of the world, I should say that the vanilla ices which Reg. and I had at Aix-la-Chapelle, washed down with *Bairischer*, were good as anything."

"Heaven help his stomach. Ices and such. You'll be gray at forty!" exclaimed Arthur. "You were you at Aix-la-Chapelle?"

"Not very. I felt as if I had been drinking out of the bloodhounds' pan at Silcotes, and swabbed the brimstone; but that was the waters. Ah! I dreamt for the next fortnight that I had stolen something of rotten eggs, and eaten them; that was the waters. Reg. shut up, and had the doctor."

"After the ices and beer?"

"Exactly," said James.

"What I want to get at is this," said Arthur. "You enjoy life. What is it which makes life enjoyable to you?"

"I have no idea," said James.

"You must have some sort of an idea. You are not a fool. Think."

"Well," said James, after a pause, "I should say 'hope.' Hope of generally bettering myself—rising higher some time or another. Succeeding at art, and rising to the position of having a house of my own,—and—all that sort of thing."

"I want to learn how to enjoy life," said Arthur. "It seems to me that no one could tell me better than yourself. As I understand you, your way of enjoying life is to wrap yourself up in yourself, and think only of your own personal advancement. I suppose you are right. Yet I am disappointed."

"You are quite wrong," said James: "I have no self. All that I think, attempt, or do, is done for another, and she is alone, nearly friendless, I doubt, and for aught I know penniless. I—"

"There, no more of it," said Arthur. "I understand there is another, then. That is all I wanted to know; never mind sentimental details. You would not enjoy life if there was not a chance of some one else enjoying it with you. I have heard all I wanted. Now for Salzburg to-morrow, for I want to get down to the war, and we shall be late."

They had been three days at Salzburg, when Arthur, sitting quietly in his chair and reading, had, like a vast number of other men in a vast number of other stories, his attention called to a knock at the door, whereupon he called out, "Come in."

There entered a pale, beardless man of about thirty-five, dressed in plain black. Arthur had time to notice that this man had very steady and beautiful eyes, before he rose from his seat and bowed deferentially to him.

The stranger bowed low also, and spoke in English, and not very good English either, using, however the universal French title, as being the most. "Monsieur, I think, labors under a mistake as to my social rank. I beg Monsieur to be seated, as I only come as a suitor, asking a favor."

"You have got a beautiful tender face of your own, Mr. Sir," thought Arthur, as he seated himself with a bow; "your wife did not want much winking I fancy."

And the stranger said, also to himself, "You are

looking man, my pale, beardless priest. Such as you among us would make twelve iron crowns shake. Kriegsturm never led on you."

Arthur began by saying pleasantly, "I am at your commands, sir."

"Understand, sir," said Boginsky, "that you are to go south to the war. I come to offer myself as courier, factotum, valet, what you will." "We never contemplated engaging the services of a gentleman in any of those capacities," replied Arthur. "We intend to go as mere happy-go-lucky soldiers, see what we can, and imagine what we can't. I really think that we do not want

to really think that you do," said Boginsky. "You are absolutely ignorant of military matters. I am a soldier, a general who has commanded a division. I will not at present say a division. I know every language spoken in the Austrian army; certainly do not. I am safe by an Austrian passport on this side of the soon-to-be-changed frontier; as soon as we are in Italy I am at home, as Italian as I am, with the meanest man in the army. I am extremely poor, which is in your favor, less you commit the error of paying me too little, and so making me independent of you). I am very amiable and good-natured, which is in your favor also; I am (personally, not politically) desperate, which is again in your favor; and, at the same time, more in your favor than all, I like your personal appearance, and you like mine."

"You tempt me," said Arthur, fairly laughing. "As a general rule, I find that this plain, outspoken frankness, with a specimen of which you have just tempted me, is the inseparable accident (to go no further) of a low rogue, who possesses the moral qualities of impudence and physical courage. You cause me of liking your personal appearance. I confess it. I want, however, further tempting. May I ask, for instance, how a high-bred gentleman like yourself finds himself in this position?"

"You have not dabbled, then, with political intrigues, tending to democracy?"

"Theoretically, yes; practically, no," replied Arthur. "I have knocked together as many constitutions as Sieyès, if that is any use to you."

"Yes; but it is not, you know," said Boginsky. "In England and America, all that sort of thing may be done uncommonly cheap. Men in England, or in France, of the aristocratic class, who live by insular distinctions, or at least get all their prestige from them, habitually take this tiger-kitten of democracy into their drawing-rooms, and call it pretty dear, and say, 'Was there ever such a pretty, harmless kitten in this world?' When the tiger-kitten grows to a real tiger, and shows its nails if they stroke its velvet pads, these men say, 'Out on the nasty, ungrateful beast!' and thank God that they are Whigs. I speak, I tell you fairly, as a headlong democrat, — as a man who, whether right or wrong, believes that universal democracy is only a matter of time, and as a man who has sacrificed marriage, wealth, home, friends, position, for my idea, knowing well all the time that I should be dead and rotten in my grave years before my idea had become realized."

Arthur rose and stood before the man, and bowed his head in sheer respect to him. Here was a man with a faith; a faith which, unluckily, as he thought at first, brought a new Gospel with it; but afterwards he asked himself whether or no it was not the

real old Gospel after all. How he settled this matter is no possible business of mine. I am not Arthur Silcote's keeper.

Boginsky went on. "I have said too much possibly, possibly too little. Let it go. You ask me how a nobleman like myself found myself in this position, and I answer by challenging you to air the mildest and most innocent of your Sieyès constitutions on the Continent of Europe. You said also that you wanted further tempting; I cannot tempt you further. You aroused the Devil or the angel in me somehow, and I have no further courtesies to interchange with you. I make you once more the offer that I should go to the war with you in a menial capacity; I like you and your looks, but I am getting weary of life."

"Come with us, then," said Arthur; "come frankly and heartily. We are rich, ignorant, and perhaps Philistine; certainly indiscreet by taking you, of whom we know nothing, except that you are a dangerous conspirator. Join us, not as a servant, but as a companion. We of course pay all expenses; and, as for any extra honorarium, you had better leave that to one of the Silcotes, possibly the most extravagant and open-handed family in England, according to their lights and their means. The bargain is struck?"

"Certainly."

"Then there is one other little detail to which I wish to call your attention. I have not the pleasure of knowing your name."

"Boginsky."

"What Boginsky?" said Arthur, in wonder.

"The younger Boginsky himself. No other."

Arthur, who had been standing up until now, sank back in his chair and took up his book. "Come and take off my boots, General," he said. "Let it be written on my tomb, that he had his boots taken off by the most brilliant guerilla democratic general in Europe. So this is what continental democracy brings a man to! My dear Count, have you dined?"

"I really have not," said Boginsky. "But I have got so very much used to hunger, among other things, that I can well wait. After I have served your dinner for you, I shall be glad of the scraps."

"Don't speak to me like that again, Count," said Arthur, sharply. "I beg you to remember that there are such animals still left in the world as English gentlemen. You are our guest from this moment. If I have offended you by my coarse insular jest of asking you to take my boots off, I have only to say that it was, through its utter incongruity, the highest compliment which my stupidity suggested to me. Take my book, sir, and make yourself comfortable. I will go after dinner, and try to find out when my two erratic boys are likely to be at home." And so he went.

Boginsky sat, and began looking at his book, but not reading it. "That man is a gentleman," he said after a time. "And he will make a gentleman of me again. God help me. I have risen very high. I have given up everything: name, fame, life, position, and the power of doing good, I fear,

* This is bold, but not impossible. If the reader had seen the younger Boginsky where I saw him, he would know it; one says nothing of Frangipanni, still less of Napoleon at Ham. Yet things are distinctly better for unsuccessful continental politicians than they were. Mont St. Michel itself has become a sentimental show-place, where idle contributors to this Magazine may get themselves shut up in dungeons, and, what is still better, get let out again by knocking at the door. In England, America, and, last and most glorious, in Italy (of all places in the world), unsuccessful continental politicians are safe.

also. Yet I have fallen very low; I have taken Austrian money from Kriegsthum; and I have offered to be this man's valet. No man of the present generation will be alive to see democracy on its legs. Garibaldi goes for monarchy. It is very hard. The forty years in the desert shadowed it out to us. Frangipanni will see his will worked out; he will see Italy united under a bull-faced Sardinian chamois-hunter. But as for the poor democrats, — I wonder whether we shall be conscious of what goes on after death. I should like to see the old cause triumph. But then again I would sooner die the second death, and be annihilated utterly, — cease to be, if that were possible, — than see it beaten. I am mazed with it all. Suppose we got it and it failed!

"This gentle Englishman has gone after his boys. I will read my book then: Edmond About. You will not do much for us, or such as you. Our heads are weary, and some of us are getting fierce. 'Sans compter le petit Mortara.' That is very good, and makes one laugh, though one wishes one's work was done and that one were dead. We shan't get much out of you French, at least if your opposition is led by Thiers, whose own mild democracy means mere French aggrandizement."

When Arthur came back he found him walking thoughtfully up and down the room. "I have something very particular and important to say to you, Mr. Silcote," he said.

Arthur was all attention.

"I wish to tell you, sir, to what I owe the honor of your acquaintance. From one reason or another I found myself, but a few days ago, in extreme poverty and considerable danger at Vienna; I accepted a mission to this place which gave me safety and a little money. I was commissioned to seek your protégé Sugden here, and involve him with the police."

"And you accepted this mission?" said Arthur with emphasis.

"I do not look much like a deceiver of youth," said Boginsky, laughing. "I accepted the mission lest a worse man might be sent on it. But I would hardly have thought it necessary to speak to you on the subject had it not been that I have too much reason to fear that the plot against this innocent youth has developed into something much darker and fouler than merely involving him with the police; and that it is my duty to warn you against what may be a very serious disaster."

Arthur sat down and watched him intently.

"The man who sent me has evidently distrusted me, and sent another to watch me. Kriegsthum is losing his head, or he would never have made the mistake of sending a lad whom I know to watch me. Had I ever intended to carry out his intentions, this act of his of setting a spy on me would have absolved me from my engagement with him. Will you come to the window with me?"

They went. Boginsky pointed to a figure lying lazily on a bench under some linden-trees, — the figure of a handsome olive-complexioned youth tolerably well dressed, lying in a beautiful careless artistic attitude, with his face turned towards their house.

"That young man," said Boginsky, "is a young Roman democrat, known to me, although my person is unknown to him. I have gathered from him that he is commissioned by Kriegsthum to watch your young friend James Sugden, and to report on all our proceedings. He came to Vienna in the suite of Miss Heathton, the travelling governess of Miss

Anne Silcote. He was abruptly discharged from their suite, because he was unable to keep to his frantic admiration for Miss Silcote. The man who commissioned him, Kriegsthum, has driven his mind to madness by telling him that Miss Silcote is devotedly attached to this Paris apple, a boy James. The young dog is a worthless member of a good Roman family, among whose traditions is assassination. Whether he carries out Orsini's bombs I cannot say; but he has a dangerous look about the eyes. I only know that I saw him handling anything like a black cricket-ball, with ten or a dozen short spikes on it. I said 'Orsini!' run down the street, and never saw him till I got round the next corner."

"Do you mean to say there is a probability of murdering James?"

"No, not a probability, but an absolute certainty," said Boginsky. "I rather think that I am included in the black list myself."

"If it were not for your shrewd face and your calm quiet eyes, I should think that you were not said Arthur. "This is going to see the war with vengeance. But I cannot make head or tail of the story yet. What possible cause of anger can Kriegsthum have against James?"

"Kriegsthum *inter alia* is right-hand man to your aunt the Princess Castelnuovo. He was a confidant in some old political plots, and in some things of which I cannot speak to you, you being her nephew and a gentleman. She is devoted to your brother Thomas, and wishes to see him in possession of the family estates. Kriegsthum's interest is, of course, the same as that of Colonel Sugden, your brother, of whom again, as your brother, I wish to speak with the profoundest respect. I only speak of Kriegsthum. Kriegsthum is apt to be unscrupulous at times (he could have stopped Orsini, but did not), and this boy, James Sugden, stands alone between the inheritance of the estates and Colonel Silcote. Consequently Kriegsthum wishes him out of the way. And so you have a noble young Roman lying on a bench in front of your door, with knives in his boots, and, for anything I know, explosive black cricket-balls covered with percussion spikes in his coat pockets. If he were to tumble off the bench now, and exploding his bombs to go off in a flame of fire, I might be pleased, but should not be in the least surprised. A British newspaper would describe it as a 'remarkable accident,' and a British jury would bring in a verdict as 'Death by the visitation of God.' But I have suffered by continental politics, and understand them. That young man is dangerous."

"You ought all to be in Bedlam together," bounced out Arthur. "James Sugden the next in succession! Why, he is a peasant-boy, born near the park-gates! My father, who hates boys beyond measure, has never interchanged fifty words with him altogether. I am my father's heir. I, who speak, come into entire possession of three-fourths of the whole property at my father's death. I objected to the arrangement, but he has persisted in it, and I have a letter up stairs from my father's lawyer assuring me of the fact; written, I believe, by my father's orders, in consequence of some old and worthless papers having been stolen from his bedroom by his servants. The boy Sugden has more to do with my father's will than you have, and the rogue Kriegsthum must be mad."

"There you spoke right, sir," said Boginsky. "there you spoke very well indeed. Our good old

thurm has lost his head, and with his head his ty, political and other. I have feared it for time; and I dread that what you say is too. He has been going wrong for some time. His ples were really sound and democratic at one but he got debauched. He trimmed too much. ced, years ago, that he was in possession of the ents of our opponents, and could state them lly, — a fatal thing in politics. Then I noticed e would talk, and even eat and drink, with crats, — a still more fatal fact against him. It ollowed, of course, by his taking to charlatano- e table-rapping, and spirit-calling, and ended, urse, by his being involved with the great au- of all confusion, the Silcotes. Poor old Kriegsn-! He has lost his head by plotting without iple. Dear old fellow! I must write to Fran- ni about him. Frangipanni has a great deal fluence with him! Poor old Kriegsthurm! I o sorry for him."

Yet he compassed your death," said Arthur, ing keenly into Boginsky's face, and thinking, ish I had your face."

Boginsky, looking at Arthur, and thinking, "I was like you," replied, "This is a mere mat- of detail. Kriegsthurm is a man who acts from ed rules. I interfered with his plans, and he ed me removed. You would hardly object to for that, would you?"

But," said Arthur, aghast, "if I interfered with r plans for the regeneration of the human race, would not murder me, would you?"

I?" said Boginsky, "certainly not. I hold that utterly indefensible for one man to take another n's life. I hold that the taking of human life in y way, judicial or not judicial, is the greatest sin ich a man can commit."

Yet you defended Vienna, and fought with your n right hand, and slew. Did you not commit the at sin then?"

"True," said Boginsky, "I sinned in defending enna, forasmuch as I took human life. But the tue of the defence counterbalanced the sin of the ughter of my fellow-men. Are you so insularly pid as not to see that? Besides, it often becomes cessary to commit a great crime to practise a no- e piece of virtue; in which case the greater the ime the greater the virtue."

At this astounding piece of logic and ethics Ar- ur gave a great gasp, and stood staring at him in ismay. He would fain have argued with him, but e heresy was too vast and too amorphous to begin n. There was, as he afterwards expressed it, no ight end to it, no handle, and so it was impossible o say where to take hold of it.

"Well, there is no doubt about one thing, sir," he aid. "We owe you a very great obligation, and ill try to repay it. We will concert measures for ur young friend's safety."

"We will discuss the matter, sir," said Boginsky. 'Remember, only, please, that to compromise him ere is to compromise me. Meanwhile we will talk over our route. I will undertake to keep my eye on the young Roman gentleman."

They talked for an hour, and decided to go to- wards Turin. The route was extremely difficult, which was a great recommendation.

At the end of the hour Boginsky took his depart- ure to make arrangements. Arthur, looking out of the window, and seeing the noble Roman still on the bench, began dimly to realize that he was ac- tually in foreign parts, and that this young man,

with his potential knives and Orsini bombs, was not only a reality, but an intolerable nuisance to be at once abated.

"I wish you were on a bench in Christchurch Meadow, my dear young friend," he thought, "and that I was proctor. I have sent as good men down for a year for half as much. Hang it," he continued aloud, "I'll try it; I'll proctorize him. I will, upon my word and honor. If he shies one of his petards at me, I am cricketer enough to catch it. I never was a butter fingers, though a bad batter. If he tries his knives on me, I will punch his head. I'll proctorize him!"

Whether to go close to him to avoid his petards, or to keep away from him to avoid his knives, he could not in the least degree decide. He ended by pursuing the old English (and French) method of laying himself yardarm to the enemy, and boarding him suddenly. He went straight up to our appar- ently slumbering young friend, shook him by the shoulder, and said roughly and loudly in French, which will be better given in vernacular than with his pedantic ill-translated Oxfordisms, —

"Get up, sir! How dare you lie here? What do you mean, you miserable young assassin, by watching a subject of Her Britannic Majesty in this scandalous manner? I am a *civis Romanus*, sir, with all the power of the British empire at my back."

The startled youth staggered to his feet, and put his right hand under his jacket.

"Don't attempt anything of the sort, sir," said Arthur, perfectly aware that he was in extreme danger of his life, but perfectly cool, and blunder- ing between rusty French and proctorial recollec- tions. "I shall permit nothing of the sort for a moment, sir. I shall write to your father, sir."

"Who are you, and what authority have you over me?" said the youth, with parted lips and danger- ous eyes.

"That is no business of yours, sir," replied Ar- thur, running into English, which the youth luckily understood. "Authority, indeed! You will call" (he was just going to say, "You will call on me at eight o'clock to-morrow morning," but saved him- self) "down the vengeance of heaven on your head, sir, if you consistently and pertinaciously persist in going on in your present course, sir; and from a careful study of your character, extending over the whole period of your University career, I fear that such will be the case. Now, you just take your hand from under your jacket, you murderous young cub, for I am a short-tempered man, and will give you the best thrashing you ever had in your life if you don't."

The Roman did so, and, smiling faintly, said, — "Monsieur has some cause of complaint against me; Monsieur said he was a Roman just now."

"I am a Roman," replied Arthur, seeing he was wavering in headlong heat, "in the Palmerstonian acceptance of the term, sir, — an acceptance which I should be inclined to think would not easily be comprehended by a person of your extremely lim- ited abilities, dissipated habits, and murderous in- tentions. You will go down for a year, sir, and I shall write to your father."

"My father is dead, sir," said the astonished and frightened Italian.

"That does not make the slightest difference, sir; it only aggravates the offence," went on Arthur, seeing that the habit of *scolding*, which he had learnt as tutor, proctor, and schoolmaster, was for

once doing him good service; and therefore scolding on with all the vagueness of a Swiveller, and the heartiness of a Doll Tear-sheet,—"I am happy to hear that he is dead. It was the best thing he could do under the circumstances, and I respect him for it. If he could see you in your present degraded position, it would bring down his gray hairs in sorrow to the grave, which you will ultimately succeed in doing."

The last fearful bathos nearly made Arthur laugh, but made him get his wits about him again. The Italian said, utterly puzzled and abroad,—

"What is it that Monsieur desires?"

"I have told you, sir: that you go away from here; that you disappear from the presence of all honest men. Do you see that sentry there?" he added, pointing to the nearest. "Shall I call to him and tell him the story of Kriegsthum and Silcote?"

"*Mais, M'sieu!*" hissed the Roman, seizing his hand and kissing it, "I am very young. I am too young to die!"

"Too old to live, boy. Repent, boy! I spare your youth, and will not denounce you. Go back to the assassin Kriegsthum, and tell him that this night he is denounced to both the Austrian and Italian governments; that all his miserable plots are discovered, and that you are the last of his emissaries that I will spare. He knows me. Tell him that Arthur Silcote said so."

The young Roman vanished from under the lime-trees, and was seen no more for the present, and Arthur stood scratching his head.

"I doubt," he soliloquized, "that I have been lying a little. I will put that consideration off to a more convenient opportunity. But Carlyle is right about his 'preternatural suspicion.' If that boy had not been bred in an atmosphere of suspicion, I never could have done anything with him by loud, self-asserting scolding. One of my St. Mary's boys would have laughed at me; it would not have gone down with the lowest of old New Inn Hall men.* I could not have done anything with that boy if his conscience had not been bad. Well, I have got rid of him, though I talked sad nonsense, as far as I can remember, and—heaven help me!—I doubt, lied. Yet the proctorial art is a great one: given the position, and if judiciously exercised. Bankruptcy commissioners, police-magistrates, and University officials are the only people who are left to keep alive the great art of scolding; schoolmasters have to be civil in these days of competition, lest their schools should get empty,—as some parsons must preach pleasant things for the sake of their pews. Hallo! Boginsky! I have packed off our Roman assassin over the Marches."

"How, then?"

"I proctorized him."

"What does that mean?"

"Scolded him till he did not know whether he stood on his head or his heels. Put out all my strong points against him, while he was condemned to silence."

"As the priest does in the sermon?" said Boginsky.

"Exactly," said Arthur. "In the slang of my University, I call that proctorizing, and think it a very good thing too. You surely can stand to hear the law laid down *once* a week, however feebly. You have six days left for interpellations. But have you been much in Prussia?"

"Why?"

"An idle thought, not worth pursuing. A *Lish* University proctor can be very *exasperant* was considering what a *Prussian* proctor was like. I doubt he would be a Tartar. *Wid* for the war. By the by, I shall have to fight with you."

"On what grounds?"

"My brother fights with the Austrians."

"*N'importe*. They will be beaten," said Arthur, "and we will be gentle with them."

"Democracy allied with the Second of *Reber!*" said Arthur; "you are a nice lot. I proctorize some of you."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE PLENIPOTENTIARY ARRIVES AT TURIN.

As they four drove into the court-yard of an inn at Turin, in their roomy hired carriage, they saw a reeking horse having his saddle taken off by a tall black-whiskered gentleman in a large coat, who talked consequentially with the landlord.

"Hallo!" said Arthur. "Here is some one travelling in the old style. There will be a sad arrival directly. I hope they have not taken the whole house."

"By no means," the landlord assured them. "It was the English plenipotentiary, travelling towards Alessandria, with the ready-signed preliminaries of peace."

"Wonder he don't go by rail if he is in a hurry. They will all have cut one another's throats before he gets there," remarked Arthur.

They were shown into a nice *salon* adjoining the suite of apartments taken by the plenipotentiary, only separated from theirs by folding-doors, which the landlord pointed out were locked on their side.

"I doubt we shall hear every word they say," remarked Arthur. "If we do hear any secrets of state, I shall unlock the door and announce myself. It is a great shame of the landlord putting us here."

"They will hear all we say also," remarked James; "and we by talking loud ourselves can give them to understand that others are within hearing. If they can hear us, they will of course at once conclude that we can hear them."

"I don't know that," said Arthur. "I have had such great experiences of human stupidity as an examiner, that I very much doubt it. If this man is an English diplomatist, I fear that the mental process will be too elaborate for him."

They were seated merrily at dinner, when a rumbling in the court-yard announced the arrival. Almost immediately after, the door of the next room was thrown open, and the great man entered.—English certainly, but not a courteous diplomatist by any means, and apparently with few preliminaries of peace about him.

At the first sound of his voice Boginsky said, "Now we will talk louder, then?" but, looking at his three companions, he saw that his three companions had laid down their knives and forks, and were looking at one another in blank astonishment.

A loud and familiar voice on the other side of the door thundered out,—

"I don't care. I repeat what I said to the fellow with his face. The whole business is the most preposterous clamjamfry of unutterable nonsense which ever was seen on the face of this earth; and now

* I am happy to say that I speak of the long past.

remedy for it would be to hang the two emperors and the king up in a row."

"But you *did* n't say that to the man, you know," said a bright woman's voice. "You were as mild as milk with him, and only began to rage as soon as his back was turned."

James jumped to his feet.

"I don't care whether I said it or not," said Silcote. "I mean it. And, since you twit me with it, I will go to his hotel after dinner and say it. Now!"

"Remember that you are abroad, Silcote, and be cautious," said the woman's voice.

"I am not likely to forget that I am abroad, my dear soul; the fleas keep me in mind of that; and, for my caution, why you yourself allow that I *did* not utter the treason of which you disapprove, after all; and for your kind sake I will not."

"Why, that is my father," said Arthur, amazed. "Who on earth is the woman with them?"

"My mother," said James, radiant with smiles.

Arthur grew suddenly sick and faint. He filled out a tumbler full of wine, and drank it off, and muttered half aloud, —

"Mrs. Sugden! O Heaven, why did I ever leave him alone! And so soon after poor Algy's death too! It is horrible. O God, forgive me my selfish neglect; forgive me my share in this miserable business."

Boginsky whispered to Arthur, "I fear we are in a more delicate situation than that of overhearing a diplomat speaking with his secretaries. From the petulance of both Monsieur and Madame towards one another, I should guess that they were just married, and in their wedding tour. Shall I strike up the Marseillaise? We must do something."

"Pray be silent for a moment," said Arthur. "See, here is another lady with them. I am going mad, and must be taken home straight and put in Bedlam."

For a third voice struck in here, — a very pretty voice indeed; but, well, a little too fine-ladyish, the thing just a *very* little overdone. That voice said, —

"So you two are quarrelling again? The very moment I leave you two together you begin at it. What is the matter *now*?"

Arthur sat down again. "It was very like too," he said to Boginsky. "I fear my nerves are not what they should be yet." And Boginsky politely agreed with him.

"Our quarrels don't come to much, do they, old girl?" said Silcote, and Mrs. Sugden laughed.

James by this time was at the door with his hand on the key. Arthur gently put him aside, threw the door open, and found himself face to face with Miss Lee, in all the full majesty of her unequalled beauty. The meeting was a little more astonishing for her than for him, for he had thought of her when he heard her voice three minutes before. And in her utter surprise, in a second of time, there passed across her face a sudden expression; a little parting of the lips, a little brightening of the eyes; which told him all he cared to know. She was her very ladylike self in one moment, although the twitch of her hands towards him when she saw him had caused her to drop her hundred-guinea travelling-bag, and made a *contretemps*. He knew all that he wanted to know in this world, and merely saying to her pleasantly, "How d'ye do! How d'ye do!" passed on with outstretched hands towards his father, seeing by a mere look at the three faces that there were somehow or other brighter and better times in the house of Silcote than there had been for forty years.

"If he *has* married Mrs. Sugden," he thought, "he might have done worse."

Silcote was very much changed, as Arthur saw in one moment. He looked so much younger, and so much more gentle. There was certainly an uncommon change in him.

"My dear father," he said, "this is a strange meeting."

"Very strange indeed, Archy," said Silcote. "I gave myself up frankly and freely to these two ladies to do what they would with me. They have done nothing but plot and conspire against me throughout the whole journey. I declare solemnly that I have never had my own way for one moment since we left Silcotes, and that their standing case against me is obstinacy. Now here they have laid their plans so well, that my own favorite son, whom I believed to be at Boppard, comes bursting in on me, with two of my grandsons, and a foreign gentleman, out of my own bedroom."

"That is not your bedroom, sir," said Arthur, hardly knowing how to begin explanations.

"Is it not? Well, I give up the point. I thought it was. I am still inclined to think it is, because I observe you have been dining in it. However, I have no opinion. These two women have cured me of all that. Now go and kiss your sister-in-law, for she has finished kissing her boy James."

"My sister-in-law."

"Ah! Tom's wife, you know."

"I don't know, sir," said Arthur.

"Don't you?" said Silcote. "It don't matter. Some of them will tell you all about it some day. They are going to the milliner's to-morrow to get some new things to go to the war with; perhaps they will tell you all about it the day after."

"I dare say you wonder to find me in company with James and Reginald, sir?" said Arthur, trying if he could get him to talk that way.

"Not I," said Silcote. "I am a perfectly resigned man. If you had been kicking against all sorts of pricks for forty years, you would find it uncommonly pleasant to get into that frame of mind. Bless you, the religionists have flourished on that secret for centuries."

"What secret, sir?"

"The secret of taking a man away from himself, and giving him peace in that way. Some of them have done it, more or less viciously and artificially. These two good women have done it for me as well as any priest that ever was born. They have brought me back to the communion, a thing you never did. What fools you men-priests are! Not one of you seems to have the sense to see that in a perfect state the priests would all be *women*. You men-priests would be in a queer way without them; they are designed and made for the priesthood. They have quite enough intellect for the office without having too much. And a highly intellectual priest is a mistake; like yourself. And the women have faith, which more than three quarters of you men-priests have not."

"You are none of you *quite* mad," said Kriegsturm once to Col. Tom; "but are close upon it."

Arthur was deeply shocked. Yet his father's argument puzzled him somewhat. He, as a priest, had been a failure, and knew it. His father's argument, slightly developed, seemed to him to mean an extreme form of Romanism. Well, even the present state of his father was better than his old one. He changed the subject.

"My dear father, I will wait for explanations

about, for instance, my new-found sister-in-law. But allow me to ask, just to start the conversation in a new channel, what on earth you are doing here?"

"My dear boy, let me first tell you how profoundly I am pleased by meeting you again. I do not want to talk business to-day, and any explanations you may want you may get from Miss Lee."

"Ah!" thought Arthur, "so I will. But, sir, you have not told me what brings you here."

"Well, a variety of matters. The one which is foremost in my mind just now is to get hold of my sister, your aunt, and get reconciled with her and bring her to reason, for I fear she is going on badly."

"How so?" asked Arthur.

"From a frantic letter she has written to me, I fear that she is in the hands of scoundrels, and well-nigh desperate. Kriegsthum, her old courier, majordomo, go-between, in all her idiotic schemings and plottings and follies, has got hold of her again, and he and Tom have drained her of all her money, and made her desperate, I doubt. My original object was a very different one: it may be carried out, and it may not. I wished to right the memory of my first wife. Whether I shall do so or not I cannot say. My first object now is to save my poor sister; it is quite possible that in doing the one thing I may do the other."

"I do not quite understand, sir."

"No, I suppose not," said Silcote, gently. "I fear I have been a sad fool, and wasted a life. My dear Archy, I have one favor to ask you. Do not in any way mention to me at present a death which has recently taken place in our family. I am very sorry, but I cannot speak of it."

"I am loath to speak of it myself, sir," said Arthur.

"I see Reginald is in mourning," said Silcote. "How did he bear it?"

"He cried," said Arthur, "once when he heard of it, and once afterwards, James tells me, in the night, for a short time."

"I scarcely did more myself, if as much. Remorse does not produce tears. Let us leave the subject."

"About my aunt, sir. What makes you think she is in these straits? Has she appealed to you?"

"Not at all. Her letter was only one in which she confessed a recent wrong towards me, prayed my forgiveness, and took farewell of me forever. I should like to catch her at it," Silcote went on, suddenly, and with energy. "I have had the bullying of her for forty years, and does she think I am going to give it up now? These two new ones," he continued, winking at Arthur, "won't stand it. You remember that for your soul's health and comfort."

"I will, sir," said Arthur, solemnly. "You have had another letter about her, then?"

"Yes," said Silcote, "I have had a letter of nine closely-written pages; a letter which, following me to the Continent, has cost me about nine shillings, — from that cantankerous old busybody, Miss Raylock. She is dragging her old bones after Tom and your aunt to the war, and has got into your aunt's confidence. I am bound to say that she has written me a most kind, sensible, and womanly letter, on which I am going to act."

"She is capable of doing nothing else, sir."

"That woman has made thousands out of us, with her confounded novels. She has no powers of invention. She put me as the principal character in her first successful novel, and made her fortune. She has spent all her money in fancy cucumbers and

geraniums, and now she is hunting my sister, for that mere purpose, I am perfectly certain, of putting her as leading character in a novel, and going to her grave with an extra thousand pounds in the Tin per Cents. But she will be deceived."

"My aunt, the Princess, would make a good central figure in a novel, sir."

"No, sir," said the old man, shaking his head. "Her folly is too incongruous; the ruck of common place fools who read novels will not have sufficient brains to appreciate the transcendental genius of her folly. Raylock will make a mess of her. She will be trying to find out motives for her conduct and my sister has n't got any."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE PRELIMINARIES TO THE TREATY OF TUNE.

"Now then, Mrs. Tom," cried Silcote, after a long talk with Arthur, "dinner is ready. I can't live talking nonsense to curly-headed youngsters, if you can. Arthur, my dear boy, take in Mrs. Tom."

"They have had their dinner, these people," said Mrs. Silcote, "and don't want any more. As for talking nonsense to curly-headed youngsters, you have been talking long enough to Mr. Arthur, and nonsense enough, too, I don't doubt."

"That's a specimen," said Silcote, pointing with his finger at the radiantly happy, good-humored and kindly face of Mrs. Silcote, — "that is a specimen of the way they treat me. Go and take her arm, and take her in to dinner. When I was your age, I could eat two dinners. Miss Lee, your arm."

Arthur, who as yet knew practically nothing went up to the woman whom his father had introduced to him as his sister-in-law: when he looked at her he said *sotto voce*, "By Jove!" She was probably the most remarkable woman he had ever seen. Tall, as tall as he, with gray hair, and a very beautiful face (described before), handsomely dressed with every fold of gown or shawl in its right place standing very calmly in a splendid attitude, as "taking him in, body and bones" (as he most vigorously expressed it afterwards), with her great calm gray eyes. As he went up to her, it suddenly struck him as quite a new idea that this was James's mother, Mrs. Sugden, the woman who lived in the little white cottage at the edge of Boisey Hill. He came to be his sister-in-law he did not inquire. His father was not likely to be wrong in a matter like this: that was the handcuff to which he clung in this wide weltering ocean of astonishment.

He took her in to dinner, and sat between her and Miss Lee. But this wonderful Sugden-Tom-Silcote woman occupied his whole attention. "Heaven save me from Bedlam!" he said; "this is the woman who used to plant beans in the smock frock. This is the wife of the man that helped to fight the poachers on the very night that James was brought in wounded. Hang it, I can't remember it all."

He remembered, however, that on one occasion the curate being absent, he had undertaken the care of the parish, just as he would have undertaken the siege of Sebastopol. And that, at that time, he had given this terrible lady in gray silk and white lace spiritual consolation, such as he had, and a shilling.

"Bless our family," he thought; "we shall fill Bedlam if we increase. Are you going to say anything to me?" he said, suddenly, to Mrs. Thomas.

"Why?" said she, calmly.

"Because I thought you were not," said Arthur.
 "What shall I say to you?" said she, with perfect good humor.

"Explain matters, that is all; like a dear good soul as you look. My father's reticence is so exasperating."

Mrs. Thomas explained everything to him from beginning to end, while Miss Lee ate her dinner, drank her wine, folded her napkin, and put it through the ring: went on explaining, while she rose after having only interchanged a few common-places with Arthur, and left the room: went on still explaining until Miss Lee returned *tremendously* dressed, as far as extravagance went, but with wonderful quietness and good taste, with her bonnet on, ready for a promenade. The two boys had gone before, to see some regiments march out.

"I am going on the Boulevards," she said, in a cool and lofty manner. "You people want to stay and talk family matters, which are no concern of mine, and which bore me. The courier said there are three more regiments to march to-night: I hear a band playing, which must belong to one of them. I shall go and see them off."

"Are you going alone, my dear?" said Mrs. Thomas.

"Alone? certainly. I am used to take care of myself, and perfectly able to do so." And with her splendid chin in the air, she certainly looked as if she was. There is no one more safe from insult than an imperially proud and handsome woman. Cads scarcely dare to look at her in the face, and the worse-than-cads know from their experience that the most they will get is furious scorn. No one knew this better than Miss Lee. She would have marched up coolly to the finest knot of dandies in Europe, and asked one of them to call her a cab; and have driven calmly off in it, with a cold bow of thanks.

"But the officers, my dear," once more interpellated Mrs. Tom.

"I shall probably try to get into conversation with some of them," said Miss Lee, with her bonnet-strings half concealing her beautiful proud chin in the air, "and consult them about the best way of getting as near the fight as possible. The King, very likely, does not go until to-morrow, and will probably review one of these regiments as they go; so I shall have a chance of seeing your fat hero. Well, good by. I shall be at home by dark, or soon after." And so she went.

Arthur still sat as if he had not heard her speak; sat for five minutes, and then rose and left the room.

Mrs. Thomas was a little indignant. "She gave him time and place in the most obvious manner," she said. "I never saw the thing done more openly in my life."

"I thought she wrapped it up pretty well," said Silcote.

"You thought," said Mrs. Thomas. "A deal you know about it. The way she did it was next thing to brazen."

"I hope he knows where to find her," said Silcote, drinking a glass of wine. "I'll be hanged if I should."

"It's lucky that your son is not quite such a stupid," said Mrs. Thomas. "She, with her marching regiments, and her King reviewing them as they passed the palace! Why, there!" she continued, warming, "as sure as ever you sit gandering in that chair, I could go at this moment, on my bare feet,

and lay my finger on that woman. She gave him time and place, I tell you, and I could lay my finger on her now."

"Could you, indeed, my dear?" said Silcote. "I have no doubt you could. Still, I think she wrapped it up pretty well. I know Turin, and she don't. I could n't find her."

"I could," said Mrs. Tom; "I have only to go down into that street —"

"Without your shoes and stockings? You said you could find her barefooted."

"— and ask," said Mrs. Tom, scornfully disregarding him, "where the King was reviewing the soldiers. And I should get my answer, and there she'd be, and him with her. Don't tell me."

"I don't want to tell you, my dear. But, surely, this heat is unnecessary."

"Not at all," said Mrs. Tom. "She gave him time and place before my own eyes: and she was too bold, — for him."

"It is all right, though, is it not?" said Silcote.

"O, it's all *right* enough," said Mrs. Tom. "But, after the way he has served her, she had no business to give him time and place as she did. I wish it had been *me*." And she shook her head with deep meaning.

"Do you, indeed, my dear? So you really wish that you had a chance at Archy? But you must reflect that you could not, under any circumstances, marry your brother-in-law; let me advise you to give up this newly-conceived passion for Arthur, and let him marry your cousin quickly. Two such dreadful tongues as yours and his would never have hit it off together, and, moreover —"

"There," said Mrs. Tom, "one mustard-seed of nonsense dropped in your way grows into a great tree of nonsense very soon. Do you know that you have to give an account of every idle word you speak? You run off into idle, senseless *badinage*, on the text of one single sentence or word. It is a silly habit."

"Yes, my dear," said Silcote. "As soon as you have done blowing me up, suppose we go and see the soldiers?"

She kissed him, and said, "You are a good old man. I don't know how you ever got on without me."

"Very badly," said Silcote. "Come, let us jog out together and see this King and these soldiers, you and me."

And so this queer couple jogged out together to gape and stare, like a couple of children, at the soldiers, the King, and everything else abnormal that came in their way. The courteous Italian crowd that made way for the strange pair only admired their *bizarre* beauty. Not one in the crowd dreamt that the life of a son and a husband was at stake, in that terrible hurly-burly so soon to begin to the east. And, indeed, they did not realize it themselves, any more than they realized how deeply they loved him; both believing that their love for him had been killed by his misconduct. Poor fools!

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE KING COMES OUT TO MARSHAL THEM.

THEY were singing in the streets of Turin that afternoon. Groups of them were singing, war ballads, love ballads. Nay, not only were arm-in-arm groups singing of war, love, loyalty, of everything

save law and divinity; but even solitary walkers piped up, quite unnoticed. Therefore, why should not Arthur, with a good voice, not untrained by choir-masters, pipe up too? He did so, however. A spectacle and scandal amongst Oxford tutors and ex-proctors, had they only heard him; which they did not. An ex-Balliol tutor, singing out, clear and loud, in the streets of a foreign city, was a thing which no one was prepared for in 1859, and, to tell the truth, is scarcely prepared for now; yet he did, this Balliol man, at the top of his very excellent voice.

"I know the way she went
Past with her maiden pony,
For her feet have touched the meadows,
And have left the daisies rosy."

The street was extremely crowded, but every one was nearly mad with good-humor; and Arthur's handsome face was so radiant, that innumerable people greeted him. "A glorious day for Italy, milord," said one. "Very much so indeed," replied Arthur. "We have the sympathies of England, if not her arms, on our side, sir," said another. "Our sympathies are in Italy while our arms are in Hindostan," replied Arthur; which was thought to be wonderfully neat, and was bandied about: for it did not take much to please them that day. "Confound it," thought Arthur, "I am being too agreeable; I know I shall get myself kissed directly, and I hate it. But I can't help it."

All this time Miss Lee was sailing on before him, with her veil up, calmly, imperial, looking every one straight in the face, and speaking to any one who spoke to her. She attracted universal and respectful attention. Arthur was proud of her.

The great rendezvous was in the Grand Place. Along the street in which they were came a regiment of blue-coated, steel-helmeted, gray-trousered cavalry to join it. The enormously high-piled ornate houses were hung with the green, white, and red tricolors from paving to coping stone, and the windows were thronged with frantic patriots, as were also the streets. It was a splendid and exciting sight; and, as they all went rushing along the narrow street in the rear of the regiment, Arthur's long dull days of sickness and loss of hope seemed indefinitely removed.

At last they came to the place of the spectacle. Their regiment was the last. Three regiments of cavalry and four of infantry were already drawn up; and there was the big-chested King himself; and there was Cavour, and there were Generals La Marmora, Fanti, Cialdini, — men whose names sound like the ringing of silver bells. Their regiment formed in, and the burly King began to move. Arthur perceived that Miss Lee had got an uncommonly good place, and then found himself face to face with Boginsky.

"A glorious day for Italy," said Boginsky.

"Threatens thunder!" said Arthur.

"And lightning," said Boginsky, who was in company with several "reds."

"How epigrammatic we all are!" said Arthur. "I myself have said the neatest thing to-day I have said for years. Why, this excitement would sharpen the wits of a mere horse," he continued artfully.

"Of a mere stupid horse indeed," replied the innocent Boginsky.

"Sharpen his wits so much that he lets the man get on his back. And now they both go away together to kill the stag. Will the man get off when the stag is dead, do you think?"

"The Emperor would never dream ginsky."

"Never for a moment," said Arthur, "ever dreamt that he would. He is a because he did not dare to keep any more black cricket-balls studded with and percussion caps on them. I was of him."

Said Boginsky, "You puzzle me."

Arthur folded his arms, caught B and then looked steadily at the King who was now within six yards of the off his hat to the King; and as he was sky towards Miss Lee, he looked into man's face with a strong stare, which as As he went he heard Boginsky gasp out "He had better."

Delighted with the purely gratuitous which he had made, Arthur got to the Lee just as the King had caught a There was no doubt whatever of his admiration, about which Miss Lee cared just nothing at all. She wanted a real good King, and she got one. If he liked the he it showed his good taste; in the perfect her perfect innocence it was perfectly whether he looked at her or not. She look at him, and the more he looked the saw.

Arthur, proudly laughing in his heart, to her, "Take my arm," and she put her it. In one moment more, unseen of any was upon her, as it lay on his arm, and hands were tightly locked together. Not was spoken; what need for words, *chance* when their two hands told their tale so truly.

Silcote with Mrs. Tom went gaudily staring at the soldiers and the shops, and ing themselves thoroughly. Silcote bought a white umbrella lined with green, which is fancy, and which he used as a pointer, to point objects of interest to Mrs. Tom; among other pointing out the King when his Majesty was four yards from the ferule.

At last they got home, and heard that Mr was home before them. Mrs. Thomas went to her, and soon returned.

"It's all right," she said; "I knew it was There, you need n't throw your umbrella across room like a lunatic; though Heaven knows, my that I am as glad as you are."

CHAPTER I.

THE DESEPTION OF THE BOYS.

"LET me introduce my friend and travel companion, Count Boginsky," said Arthur to father.

"I am delighted to know you, sir," said Silcote frankly and pleasantly. "I hear from Arthur if you are actually good enough to come to the with us as *cicerone*. It is a piece of good luck which we could not possibly have reckoned."

"Nor I either," said Boginsky. "I shall not believe that times are going to change for the better with me."

"They are, sir, they are," said the Squire. "Believe it, sir, that these great convulsions shake things into their places. We are going to see a very great thing, sir. I begin to imagine a very great thing indeed. I am sorry for poor Austria, for I tell you

honestly that, with all her political folly, I have a sneaking kindness for Austria. But the world will gain."

"Then you are perfectly sure that Austria is to be beaten?"

"In the nature of things. Do you doubt? Her cause is not just."

"She fights well, however," said Boginsky, "and her cause is as just now as it was in '49, when she won. I think it a very doubtful business indeed, sir."

"No? do you, really?" said the Squire, pacing the room excitedly. "My dear Archy, he thinks it doubtful. I don't know which I would like best: to have Tom back among us again, thrashed heartily and repentant; or to have him come cranking in victorious. Heaven help the Frenchman that gets in his path. You think, sir, that it will be a case of the Devil among the tailors, then?"

"I beg pardon," said the puzzled Boginsky.

"My father means that there will be a great struggle," explained Arthur.

"Undoubtedly," said Boginsky. "Taking the Austrian army altogether, and considering the wonderful mixture of tribes, almost of nations, in its ranks, I rank its personal valor higher than that of any army in Europe. Of the Prussian army I can say nothing, as it has not been mobilized for above forty years; but, looking at the performances of other European armies, I rank the *personnel* of the Austrian army as high as any, even as high as the British."

"Do you rank us first, then?" said the Squire.

"It is our habit to do so. Your little army is always in practice. Your nation is never at peace. Amongst your little army of 140,000, there are in each regiment at least ten men to each company who have been under fire. You fail in handling large bodies of men, because none but your Indian officers ever have the chance of doing that, and they seem to be carefully shelved. But I rank the *personnel* of your army as the first in Europe; with them I put the pick of the French and Russians, and the whole of the Austrians. England and Austria have no inferior regiments, and no men whom they will use able to lead their armies. France and Russia would beat them by generalship."

"And Italy?" said Silcote, pleased and interested.

"Italia is not yet," said Boginsky; "she may be next month, next year, fifty years hence; but she is not yet. We go to see the dice thrown for her."

"I should like to have seen a red-coated regiment or two in the hurly-burly," said the Squire. "Merely on sentimental grounds."

"One would have liked to see the red-coats also, we democrats," said Boginsky, "but it is not expected of England. England has accepted democracy as the breath of her nostrils only in a modified form as yet, but the sacred spirit will show itself perfect. England's mission is to disseminate democracy in new lands; with regard to the old ones, we dispense with her. It is I, and such as I, who carry the fiery cross over land. We are contented with her, and we love her, if she will fulfil her special mission of carrying it by sea."

"Do you know," said the Squire, "that this is wonderfully interesting? But it is sad nonsense, I doubt, Archy; is it not?"

"No," said Arthur.

"Then give us some more of it," said the Squire to Boginsky. "He is my spiritual director, you

know. I spent a couple of thousand pounds on his education to fit him for the post. If he approves of it, give us some more. To help you. What do you think of the fat man?"

"Cavour?"

"Heavens, no! Don't talk any nonsense about him. The stout man on the gray horse."

"He will be King of Italy; and I object to kings as a rule. Do you know, sir, that I must change the conversation, for the mere purpose of delivering myself of a war mission which should have been executed before?"

"You look grave. Is anything wrong?"

"I think that nothing is wrong," said Boginsky. "But that very much depends on how you will take it. Have you seen your grandson, Reginald, since last night?"

"No. At my time of life I have given up all idea of being treated with proper respect by boys. I had concluded that he and his cousin James had gone for an expedition into the country, to get out of my way."

"I pointed out to your grandson, and to James Sugden, that they were not behaving well, but I could make no impression on them whatever. Mr. Sugden was spokesman, and gave me my commission to Mr. Arthur. He said that they were exceedingly sorry to cause any annoyance, but that they had made up their minds, and to save words, had done it secretly, because they knew that James's mother (the beautiful gray-haired lady, I believe) and the Squire would have objected to it, and would not have permitted it for a moment."

"What have the two young fools done now, then, in the name of confusion?" demanded the Squire.

"They requested me to point out the fact," continued Boginsky, unheeding him, but going through his commission, "that women would be in the way, and that they were determined to see it; and also that they had plenty of money for the present, and that, when it ran short, they would send to you for more."

"This story begins to hold together," said the Squire; "I can quite understand this part of it. No doubt they will. But what have they done?"

"Then, as a last resource, having used all my own arguments, I appealed to the Colonel himself. I pointed out to him that Reginald was risking your good favor by taking such a step, and that James Sugden's mother had only just arrived from England. He laughed at me. He said that it was good for them, and took them away. I never yet got the best of my friend Frangipanni."

"Frangipanni!" exclaimed the Squire. "What on earth has he been doing with my boys? What midsummer madness is this?"

"Count Frangipanni is colonel of the 18th regiment of the Sardinian light-horse,* which marched last night. Reginald Silcote and James Sugden were his two favorite pupils in his Italian class at St. Mary's Hospital. He has seduced them away with him to go and make sketches of the war, and has promised to take them under fire; which he probably will do, as he is one of the bravest men in Europe, and as they would follow him down the crater of Vesuvius."

"This is very pleasant, Arthur," said Silcote. "This is thoroughly pleasant."

* Not to deprive brave men of their glory, even for a moment, in a work of fiction, it is necessary to say that the men of Genestrello were the regiment at Montserrat (with some squadrons of other regiments) under command of General Sonnaz.

"Lucky young dog," said Arthur; "they promised to stick by me. I would go after them if I could get franked by a colonel."

"They will be killed," said the Squire.

"Most likely," said Arthur. "But they will have taken some bad sketches first, which we shall find on their corpses."

"How shall we break it to Mrs. Tom?" said the Squire.

"Tell her all about it the next time she comes into the room," replied Arthur; "I should say that was the best way. If you are afraid, let me."

"It will be a terrible shock to her," said the Squire.

"She has been under fire herself in the Crimea more than once," said Arthur. "She will not care much. They might have taken me with them, I think. Here she is. Mrs. Tom, James has bolted to the front, and is going under fire. Hallo, what is this?"

"Only my old dress as field nurse in the Crimea," she said, quietly. "I found out why he was gone, and where, and I got ready to go after him. I should suggest marching myself if we are to see anything at all. The last regiment goes to-morrow; and, as far as I can gather from the soldiers, the causeways are narrow, and our carriages will get hampered among the commissariat wagons if we delay. I should have proposed marching in the rear of Frangipanni's regiment if I had known that the boys were to give us the slip. We had better order the carriages at eight to-morrow morning."

From this time she and Boginsky took the lead. She dressed in gray with a modest hood, looking so much like some sort of *sœur de charité* that she got the route everywhere, and carried her train with her. Miss Lee carried her silks and satins through the scenes which came afterwards, attended by Arthur, who kept the dress of an English parson.

CHAPTER LI.

THE FAMILY BEGINS TO DRAW TOGETHER.

WHETHER it was the fault of Count Frangipanni, or of James, that the latter took the extraordinary step of running away from the newly-united party, is one of those things which it is hardly necessary to make clear. Whichever of them originated the idea, it was soon acted on. There is one thing certain, — that the Count took the most elaborate pains to point out to James that if he stayed with the carriages he would see absolutely nothing. James did not want much encouraging. "If we argue and ask leave, Reggy," he said, "we shall never have leave to go. Let us bolt."

"Certainly," said Reginald. And so they commissioned Boginsky, whom they met in the crowd, to arrange matters for them in the best way he could.

When they commissioned him to say that they had money enough for the present, they spoke the truth. Their money, however, looked a great deal smaller after they had bought a couple of little horses. But, as James said, they were going with the winning army, and would make requisitions on the conquered territory. Besides, they had their watches and at least ten pounds apiece. A real schoolboy will go into any adventure with a pound in his pocket.

Boginsky might have supplemented his commission from them to Arthur by mentioning that he had bought their horses and saddles for them, getting these articles for them, by means of his democratic connection, at about half the price they could have

got them for themselves; moreover, that the evening of the previous day in fact their painting tackle, money, and clothes, they were conveying them to the little café at which the rebelliously lodging. He suppressed the facts entirely. The fact is that he would have gone to himself, but felt bound in honor to stay with Arthur. And, indeed, with his political character, was much safer in the rear than in the front, under the *civis Romanus agis*, he travelled in cote's barouche.

The boys were pleased at their escape. Troopers liked them, and they liked the English, said the Italians, the free country, sympathized with the cause, although with complications elsewhere happened to prevent assisting in it, as they had assisted in the Crimea. Yet she had sent her best blood (according to Frangipanni), to look on, even if they could fight. They were in perfect good-humor with the English, these troopers, and considered James the light of a political demonstration. To him personally they were devoted, like every one else. "the only agreeable person which your family ever produced," said Miss Raylock of him after to the assembled Silcotes.

They went on under the bright May weather, and far, through pleasant ways across the low slopes of the Apennines. But few people were about, and those got fewer as they went on. The two friends could make little or nothing of the plan of the campaign, and indeed cared little whether the Austrians would test the right or the left of their position; all they cared about were the incidents.

They had a very pleasant incident one warm May day. Travelling over nearly plain open meadows, planted here and there with *umbellifers*, keeping the green, abrupt hills on their right, they came to a stream by a village, and by this stream lay a battalion of French soldiers, some of whom officers came and fraternized, but the body of which lay and sat still. The stream in which these two audacious youths watered their horses was the *Passaggio*, the village was Genestrello. The French battalion which lay on the grass was a battalion of the 74th, under General Cambriels; but little they knew or cared about these details. The two simple-minded youths were at the extreme breaking-point of a great wave, the foremost wave of a sea which was to burst over, and to regenerate, nay make a kingdom; but they were utterly unconscious of it. The place was picturesque, and the day warm. Farther on the scenery seemed to promise better. They rode in advance of the troops along the broad dusty road, and turned off into a hedgeless field on the left, lay down on the grass, and, letting their tired horses graze, took their dinner of sausage, bread, and wine.

Then they began sketching. The field was wide and open, with here and there a tree. Before, and close to them, was the broad and dusty highway, separated from them by a long ditch and a few shaped stones at regular intervals. Beyond, and close to them, was a handsome collection of Italian buildings; a church notably; an inn; a larger building than either of these, probably a country gentleman's house; all noble-looking, of yellow stone, with red roofs and dormer windows; behind all a wooded hill. It was a place which the idliest tourist would like to sketch, with or without an incident. They were lucky enough to see a remarkable inci-

were much too scared to introduce it into the escape.

Their friends were well in sight on their right, as dinner-time with them as with James Reginald; yet their friends were taking no dinner. Their friends the Sardinian cavalry moved the move again, and soon passed them along at a foot pace.

"All we go with them?" said Reginald.

"I can soon catch them up," said James. "We show our sketches."

So they finished them.

As late when they had finished them, and they ate their supper. They bethought them of going to the group of houses which they had been sketching, on the other side of the road. One of the things they found was a rather good inn, the landlord of which was perfectly willing to receive them. Marked to them, had they understood Italian, five men to-day, dead men to-morrow. An odd day, a hospital the day after. Come in, gentlemen, but pay beforehand; the dead do not as a rule."

They understood his demand of payment beforehand, and satisfied him. Then they had their supper and discussed whether it was worth while or not to follow Count Frangipanni and his light-horse so

They could easily follow him in the morning, agreed, and the quarters were good. So they ate, and went out in the front of the inn to smoke. The jollity of their march seemed to have departed. None of the officers from the battalion of which which was lying so close to them were swarming in and out of the inn, as is their custom. There was none of that brisk, merry, good-humored babble between officers, men, and civilians which makes the arrival of a French regiment so agreeable. The officers seemed all to be lying down by the brook with their men to-night, thinking of quite other things than absinthe and dominoes. Our friends began to get sorry that they had not gone on with Frangipanni's light-horse.

Only one French officer was in front of the inn when they sauntered out to smoke,—a thickest man, with a gray mustache and shaven cheeks, with a scarlet side of his cloak turned outside, and much told about him, who also walked up and down smoking. "Evidently," said James, "a swell; the very man to consult." If he had known that it was General Forey it would not have made much difference; for, if he had ever known, he had completely forgotten, what General Forey had done, or had left undone. How many of my readers remember?

James, cap in hand, and schoolboy French in his mouth, went up to General Forey, and confided to him that they, two young English artists, were travelling with Frangipanni's light-horse, and had got left behind. The General, also cap in hand, told him politely that if he remained where he was he would be extremely likely to meet his friends, Messieurs of the Sardinian light-horse, once more; and so bowed himself politely out of the audience.

They saw soon afterwards that he was joined by two staff-officers, that his orderly brought his horse from the stable, and that he rode sharply off, in the direction by which they had come.

They lay in the field in front of the house till it was late, and then went to bed and slept quite quietly. They had no Italian, either of them, or might have learnt much. In the morning, trusting to the French General's opinion that their friends would return by the same route, they quietly

had their breakfast, went across the road, and lay in the shade of a mulberry-tree, smoking, and touching up their sketches.

There was the broad and dusty road, divided from the field by shaped stones; beyond, the yellow-and-red pile of buildings, one of which was their inn; beyond, the pleasant wooded hill; to the left, heights crowned with important-looking buildings. And now came their incident.

In a cloud of dust their friends of the Sardinian light-horse came along the highway at a slinging trot the way they had gone, fulfilling General Forey's prediction. Our youths knew nearly every face in the regiment, and a merrier set of fellows they had never seen; yet every face was grave enough now. The last man who passed them was Frangipanni, bringing up the rear. The regiment passed them about three hundred yards, and then, at a few notes of the bugle, wheeled each man in his own ground, and was at once formed in column of squadrons on the road; Frangipanni, having wheeled with them, standing sole and solitary at their head.

For a few minutes there was silence. The Sardinian light-horse had scarcely settled themselves in their places when the silence was broken. James and Reginald were still innocently looking at their old friends, drawn up across the road, and trying to make out the faces of the officers who were most familiar to them, when they were startled by the infinitely inharmonious, yet deeply terrible, crashing, trampling, and clanking of another regiment of cavalry, approaching along the high road from their left.

Reginald saw them first, for James was staring at Frangipanni. "Here is another regiment," said Reginald, "all in white. These will be the French."

James looked round once, and shook him fiercely by the shoulder. "Get up!" he said, "here are the Austrians upon us, and we are in the thick of the whole thing."

"The who?" said Reginald.

"The Austrians, you ass," said James. "Get up, will you!" Who in heaven or earth would ever have thought of this? Run, scud, get out of the way, get on your legs at any rate, and, if we get involved in it keep your arms above your head, and keep on your feet. Get hold of a stirrup if you can, but run with the horses, and get out of it as quick as you are able. By Jove, who would have thought of this?"

Reginald, though he scarcely understood what was coming, behaved very well. He ran with James some ten yards into the meadow, and then they both turned to look on war itself, as few have looked on it.

The Austrians halted. They knew that the French were there, and the French had got a terrible prestige since the Crimea, which they have maintained. The Austrian colonel halted his men for one instant, and rode forward towards the ravine alone before them all to see if the concealed French could be tempted into opening fire at him. He went within pistol-shot of Count Frangipanni; but the French know the business of war, and he saw nothing but the Sardinian regiment of light-horse.

"Look at that glorious Austrian colonel," said James to Reginald. "There is a man who don't mind death. I wish to heaven that their cause was better. Watch that Austrian colonel. Did you

see such a noble fellow in your life? See how his horse; I confess that my principles would vary under the influence of such a man." "I think I know him," said Reginald. "What are they going to do?" said the excited man. "Viva Italia! By heavens, our fellows are going to charge!"

So gave the order for the first charge at Genesio. Tom Silcote or Aurelio Frangipanni? The latter is the same. A thousand men on each side, armed on horseback, with drawn swords in their hands, in column of troops, rode fiercely at one another, trying to slay one another, happily with little result.

The first two troops on either side got themselves, to a certain extent, bruised, shaken, and cut with swords; while the rearward troops drew back and did nothing until the bugle gave the word. The Italian cavalry to right about face, which they did accordingly.

But Frangipanni and Colonel Silcote, however, were rather loath to part, for each had found in the other a good swordsman. For full half a minute, the Italian retreat had sounded, these two alone together, fencing cautiously and keenly, with apparently perfect good-humor. Colonel Silcote was the first to rein his horse back and say, "You must follow your men, Colonel. Your major, so busy, has sounded the retreat." Frangipanni saluted politely, smiled, and trotted off after his regiment, while the Austrians prepared to add to their fellows are beaten, then?" said James, with an air of discontent. "I cannot see why; they did do quite as well as the others; but I suppose that the Major knows what he is about. Frangipanni gave no orders. There goes my Austrian officer off at a sling trot after them. I hope he can come to grief."

"Your Austrian colonel, you turncoat!" said Reginald. "Yes, mine," said James, emphatically. "I like the look of that man. I would go to the Devil after him."

"He is one of the accursed Tedeschi," said Reginald. "What would our comrades say?" "I don't know, and I don't care," replied James. "He is a much finer fellow than any of the Italians, Tom Frangipanni. He saved Frangipanni from being taken prisoner. I heard him give him the office of captain," went on James, reproducing, in his imitation, a very old London vulgarism. "That is a noble gentleman, if he were fifty Tedeschi." "No he is," said a voice apparently from high above the air. "You never said a truer word than James Sugden. Who ever dared to say that to you? Do you remember the night when I tried you, a poor bruised and bleeding little fellow into Silcotes, away from the poschers, and your fortune at the expense of his own?"

"Turn and find our old friend, the Princess, — on a tall bay horse, in a blue riding skirt, with a bodice, a wideawake hat and cock's feather — a revolver at her right pommel, — was a small surprise. After having looked on, at a few yards' distance, at a charge of cavalry, in which some eight were killed, and some twelve left limping and moaning in the road, one is not inclined to be surprised at anything. James merely took off his hat, and said, "Madam, I scarcely hoped to have the pleasure of seeing you here." Reginald said nothing whatever but stared at his aunt, opened.

"I dare say not," she answered. "I am in Colonel Silcote's regiment. How did you get here?"

"We came with the Sardinian light-horse, my lady."

"You might have been in better company," said the Princess. "Why did you not come on with us?"

"Our sympathies are Italian, my lady. Do understand you that the colonel we saw just now was Colonel Silcote?"

"Did you not recognize him?"

"I do now. Reginald, you said that you thought you knew him. But I should scarcely have recognized my own father, in such a place, and in such a uniform."

"Are you here on foot? Where are your horses?"

"Across the road, my lady."

"You had better get them. Is there any force of French on this brook here, the Fossagazzo?"

"I decline to answer that question, my lady," said James. "Reginald, I hope you were not going to speak. Hold your tongue, sir. How dare you?"

"Well, I suppose you are right," said the Princess, good-humoredly. "Here comes Urban; we shall know soon. Hark! there is infantry there, and French infantry. You might have told me without doing any harm. They are in force, are they not? Is it Forey? Get your horses, you young fools, get your horses, and come back across the road to me again. Do not lose a moment."

They ran across and got out their horses and were back with her in less than five minutes, abandoning their heavy baggage; for their was a sound in their ears, familiar to us now, which they had never heard before.

Rapid musketry firing. At first only crackling like the burning of the gorse on the hills above St. Mary's, but growing heavier every moment, until it roared out in heavy crashes, which shook the air even where they stood, and brought a few heavy drops of rain from the summer clouds which floated overhead. When they got back to her they found her in the same position, gazing intensely at the dip in the broad dusty road about a quarter of a mile to their right, from which came furious volleys of musketry, and a general raging confusion, which showed them that they had pushed too far for safety, and were actually at the very point where the armies would decide their first struggle.

The Princess was perfectly calm. "Tell me, James Sugden, as a gentleman to a lady, is Forey there?"

And James answered, "I believe he is, my lady."

"In force?"

"I decline."

"You are right. Well, with his present reputation, he will fight hard to regain his former one. You will take care of a poor old woman in case the poor Tedeschi are beaten back?"

"My lady, I am entirely at your service," said James.

"You will keep with me, then?"

"Certainly," said James.

"The Italians would murder me, and you are well *répandu* among them. Keep by me. I hold you on your honor as a gentleman."

"Here come the Austrians back again," exclaimed James.

And indeed the cavalry were returning along the

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road in some confusion, followed by their friends of the light-horse. At the same moment, possibly the first rifled-cannon bullet ever fired in anger rose up the ground near the Princess, and covered her with dust.

"We may as well move a little farther," she said; "this is too close to be pleasant."

It was a very reasonable suggestion; so they trotted along till they were fairly past the village of Genestrello, and then paused and looked about them.

Opposite to them were two abrupt, rounded, and partly wooded hills, about half a mile off, the one on their right crowned by a single large building with a campanile, the one to the left by a village with another campanile. A small hollow divided the two hills, and they saw that the French army, battalion after battalion, was already swarming up the right-hand hill towards the solitary building, under a heavy fire from the solitary building, the summit of the hill, and the village on the other hill.

The firing got more fast and furious every moment. The right-hand hill was rapidly blackening with the swarming French, who were bringing up artillery; and far away some Sardinian cavalry were seen charging up the hill. The first hill seemed to be doomed, in which case there seemed but small chance for the second.

Genestrello was carried too, for the roar grew louder and nearer, and broken regiments began to pass them, from which men fell out, and sat down and began feebly and pitifully to try to get at their wounds. It was certainly time to move, for the cannon-shot were ripping and crashing amongst the trees, and the summit of the first hill was a mere raging volcano. And which way were they to go, except away from the French?

As they went, they saw the village on the second hill carried; and lo, it was evening, and the day had passed like an hour. The battle of Montebello was over and won. Night was coming on, and the Austrians were in retreat. They had "felt" for the French, and had found them. Montebello showed pretty clearly which way the campaign was to go. If they were unable to hold such a position as that, what would be the result elsewhere?

CHAPTER LII.

JAMES AND HIS FATHER.

THE Princess cared little for Montebello. Her horror at Tom Silcote's going to the campaign had ended in her determining to go with him, and she had accompanied his regiment in the way we have seen; riding parallel with his regiment, with which she was quite familiar, and which she may be said to have joined; and seeing almost the very first blood drawn, and having witnessed the battle of Montebello from a quiet field, without being very dangerously under fire at all.

This would have been enough for the ambition of most amateur lady-soldiers, but she thought nothing of it. The day of Montebello was a triumph for her foolish soul, for she had succeeded in deluding James hopelessly across into the Austrian lines, and she considered that a great stroke of business.

The foolish plans which they had made against this young man have been discussed before. None of his enemies had the slightest idea about his real claims to be a dangerous person, with regard to the Silcotes succession, and its almost hopeless entangle-

ment. He was looked on as the "dangerous horse" however; and she prided herself on her dexterity in tempting him into the Austrian lines. "We have him in our power now," she said to herself, scarcely knowing what she meant.

She could not dream, of course, that she was on in the way of introducing the boy to his own father. Let our story tell itself.

The Austrian left was withdrawn hastily the night towards the Sesia: there was great confusion. The Princess and our two friends rode together in Casteggio about eight o'clock; and there four ranged warlike order, with warlike disorder dribbling through it to the rear of it, to become order again.

Our friends had lost their Austrian regiment, and waited for it at Casteggio. It was in a sad plight General Blanchard had brought up with him son of this infernal new artillery, and had played as mischief with them. The regiment was passed through Casteggio towards the rear, wearied, disheartened, and half cut to pieces. They thought fit a time that Tom Silcote was not with them, but was killed; but last of all, bringing up the rear of the straggling and wearied squadrons, he came with bloody face, bareheaded, holding his reins in his sword-hand, and his left arm hanging loosely beside him.

"He is hit," said the Princess. And they joined him.

"I have got a graze on my left arm from a French bullet," he said, cheerily, "not to mention a wig over the head from that jolly old Italian colonel. I thought I was a swordsman till I met him."

"Wretch!" said the Princess; "after your saving his life this morning!"

"Not at all, Aunt. A jolly old cock, every inch of him. We only politely renewed our fencing-mate and he only cut me over the head and apologized."

"What is the name of this Italian colonel of yours," asked the Princess of James, "who accepted his life in the morning, and tries to assassinate the man who saved him an hour afterwards?"

"Count Frangipanni," said James, without comment.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the Princess. "How strangely things come round. He might have been excused for cutting off my head, I don't deny. In fact, I should have told him so afterwards, the very next time I met him. But he has no grudge against you."

"He has n't any grudge. Don't be silly. What are these two young men with you?"

"Your nephew Reggy, and his friend."

"Then — not you, Reggy, but Reggy's friend — I am going to give you some trouble. Strange, seem to have said those very words before. I am sure I have. I am very slightly hit, and am not in the least degree feverish. I am certain that I said those words before, at some time or another, or, at least, words almost exactly like them."

"You did, sir," said James, quietly; and that was all.

"I think I remember your face; and I am sure that I like it. Our billet is at Pozzo d'Orno. Will you come on with us?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Have you a good set of nerves? Can you hold a surgeon? I am hit, but not heavily. I must be with my regiment in three or four days. I don't know whether the ball is in my arm or not. Will you nurse me? I can't reward you, but I am d

ained to see this thing out. Will you help me it by nursing me?"

"I will, most cheerfully, sir."

"I am the person to nurse you, Tom," broke out a Princess. "I will have no interference from y quarter whatever between you and me. At all ents, I will not see you poisoned or assassinated der my own eyes, and me standing looking on. u do not know what you are doing; you do not ow in whose hands you are trusting your life. u are throwing away the benefits of one of the st extraordinary dispositions of Providence which, der me, have ever been accomplished—"

"Don't be a fool," said Colonel Tom, peevish th his wound; "I want some one to see to me, d I choose this young man, and I will have him, —"

"Have Reggy," cried the Princess. "If it was e last word I ever spoke, have Reggy."

"He is too great an ass, and you are too fussy. hall have this young man."

"Hear his name," said the Princess, "His name James Sugden."

"You know I have my own opinions about that tter, Aunt. Sugden, will you stay with me a ple of days, and trust me as I trust you?"

"I cannot understand her Highness's allusions," d James, simply. "I only know that years ago, u kindly and gently carried me to Silcotes, after u had been beaten by the poachers; and that her ghness as kindly and as gently received me. God ows, sir, that I would do anything possible to re- your kindness or hers."

"Stick by me, then. I want an English face. you are that young monkey, hey? I remember all. What a pretty little dog you were! Like a le fox."

"I am not pretty now, then, sir?" said James, iling, and looking steadily at him.

"No; decidedly not."

"You do not like the look of me, sir?"

"I like the look of you only too well. Where l you get those pleasant steady eyes of yours?"

"My eyes are said to be like my mother's, sir," lied James, who thought that the Colonel was, in te of his denial, wandering a little, and who shed to humor him.

"I wish you would get another pair," said Tom cote. "Your eyes are unpleasantly like another ir of eyes into which I used to look years ago, and ve never forgotten, boy, — never forgotten, — ver forgotten. I suppose *she* will come, too, at e great gathering at the end of all things."

He was certainly feverish with his wound. The iness, after her last rebuff, rode apart with Reg- ald, and poured her grief into his bosom. She d not like him, but she must tell her woes to ne one, and so Reggy got the benefit of them w.

"What I have done for that man," she said, "and y he says I am fussy! Reginald, pray that you y never know the bitterness of ingratitude in se you love. It is the bitterest thing you will er know."

"I have no doubt it is, Aunt. Can you tell me ere is Anne?"

"At Vienna. After all I have done for him! ginald, he does not love me! It is very bitter to ; he prefers a smooth-faced boy to me, who have rificed everything for him. Reginald, my dear, s your grandfather very intimate with this lad mes?"

"Intimate? No. He never liked him. Ye say that Anne is at Vienna. I do not like this u all. I wish I was at Vienna with her."

"You will never have such a chance of seeing war again."

"I dare say not, and I don't wish it. I want to go to Vienna, and I have no money. I wish *you* would lend me some."

"I am sorry I cannot do so," said the Princess. "He wants it all."

So talking, they got to the little village of Pozza d'Orno, well to the Austrian rear, and halted at last Colonel Silcote was decidedly feverish, but kept to his resolution of moving with his regiment, as soon as it was ready to move. Meanwhile, he banished the Princess and Reginald, on the very rude grounds which he had stated above, that the one fused and that the other was a fool, and imperially insisted on James's ministrations, in the very way in which men, who have been spoilt by women all their lives, do demand the services of other people, — and, in *such* cases out of ten, get them.

He took a strange fancy, almost a passion, for this son of his, thrown in his way so strangely. Little dreaming why. The young man's eyes he remembered to be like other eyes not seen for twenty years; but he had forgotten, or thought he had forgotten, his deserted wife's voice; yet James's voice was strangely pleasant and soothing to him. He did not connect the eyes and the voice together at all; yet they had the effect of making him silent, very thoughtful, and more gentle than he had been for years.

"He insists that no one shall come near him but you," said the dismissed Princess, with a sniff. "You had better go and see what *you* can do with a man who has cast off, in his base ingratitude, those who have sacrificed everything for him. He will curse and swear at you, and try to strike you, but I dare say you will not mind that."

"Not a bit," said James.

The Princess was as far right in what she said as this: Tom Silcote, a terrible bully, would most certainly, at ordinary times, have sworn at *her*, or at any one else, who had kindly tried to assist him when he most wanted assistance. It is the way of some men to be fractious and brutal as soon as they are thrown entirely on the kindness and love of those whose lives are bound up in theirs; and it was his way generally. Not so now. He swore a good many oaths at his uniform, his shirt, his own clumsiness, Giulia's stupidity, and so on; but none at James.

"Come here and help me to peel, lad," he said, "and see if you and I cannot pull through it without the doctors. What frightful humbugs they are! It would not take many hours to learn *their* trade, as far as I have any experience."

"You have not had much knowledge of them, I should think, sir," said James, after he had gently removed his shirt, and the whole magnificent torso of his father lay bare before him. "Men who carry such a chest as yours are but poor customers to the doctors. Your poor brother, Mr. Algernon, knew more of them than you are likely to do. He loved his doctors dearly. It was taking him away from his doctors that killed him, I doubt."

"Killed him? Algy?" cried Colonel Silcote, starting up.

"He is dead, sir."

"Dead! Why, that was the finest fellow that ever was born, I tell you. It is impossible."

"I quite agree with you in your estimate of him."

but he is dead and buried for all that; and I am engaged to his daughter."

"It is an infernal shame," said the Colonel.

"I hope you will be brought to look upon your niece's engagement differently in time, sir," said James, purposely misunderstanding him on religious grounds. "Do you think that you could make it agreeable to yourself to be quiet for a few minutes, while I see what is the matter?"

The Colonel submitted.

"Here is a nasty blue-red cut over the surface of the deltoid," said James; "but you lost very little blood. We must have the doctor to this; it is beyond me."

"If I do I'll be —"

"Invalided, you were going to say. Not at all. It is a mere scratch. How about this broken head of yours, Colonel? The Count seems to have given you the St. George. Let me look at it."

Tom Silcote submitted his curly, splendidly-shaped head to the inspection of his son quite quietly. James pronounced once more for the doctor, and carried his point. The doctor was introduced, — a small Czech gentleman, the glory and pride of whose life was that he had been born and bred at Zuckmantel. Why he was proud of being a Zuckmantel man no one ever knew; but he gloried in it, and was personally offensive in many ways to Colonel Silcote.

The doctor thought that he was going to speak first, but he was mistaken. Silcote raised himself on the sofa from his hips, casting off the uniform coat which James had put over him, and opened fire on the doctor in German, before he had time to mention Zuckmantel.

"Now, look here, you doctor. I wish you to understand my case at once. I am wounded slightly, and want to be set right instantly. I want to be fighting again in two days from this time."

"The great Frederick, passing through Zuckmantel," began the doctor.

"— the great Frederick, and Zuckmantel, and you," said Tom Silcote. "I tell you that I want to fight again in two days. Will you come and look at me, or will you not? You and your Zuckmantels and Fredericks. If you can do anything for me, say so. If you can't, go. This is the most miserable little humbug in Europe," he added to James in English.

The little doctor looked at him on the head and in the arm, and said that he must be invalided.

"Look here," said Tom Silcote. "If you declare me invalided, I will denounce you to-morrow. You are taking pay from a government which you are trying to overturn. You are a leading member of the Democratic Committee of Breslau, if you are not president. I have letters of yours which would condemn you ten times over. How did I get them? Why, your friend Kriegsthum gave them to me as a safeguard when I came on this campaign, so that I might hold them in terror over you. He was afraid that you would poison me, — a fate which I have avoided by taking internally none of your filthy drugs. If you invalid me to Vienna, you go to Spandau the next day."

The doctor examined him again, while James, sitting behind his father, parted his hair for the doctor's examination.

The doctor took a different view of the matter this time. The cut on the head was a slight scalp wound now, of no consequence. The wound on the arm was merely a skin graze, with a great deal of

ecchymosis, undoubtedly. There was no reason why the Colonel should be invalided. He applied his remedies.

"You are helping to ruin your cause, you doctor," said Tom Silcote, when he had finished his work. "I am better already. In two days, thanks to you, I shall be fit for my work again. At the throat of you scoundrelly, half-concealed democrats sword in hand."

"You should not have said that," said James when the doctor was gone.

"Why not?" asked Tom Silcote.

"Well, it was not gentlemanly, and their cause is the best, you know."

"Not the cause of a creeping little toad like that! He takes Austrian money."

"I do not speak of him. I speak of the Sardinian cause against the Austrian. I am an Italian at heart."

"I doubt that I am also," said Tom Silcote; "but you cannot sympathize with the miserable spaw which both sides use, and which both sides despise. Now let me sleep; I am very tired with marching and fighting, and I want rest."

The little Zuckmantel doctor, who makes his first and last appearance here, had given James orders that the Colonel's arm must be dressed again in the middle of the night. He added, also, that he entirely forgave the Colonel for swearing at and denouncing him. He was an Englishman, as was also Monsieur, and the English always did and denounced when poorly.

James lay beside his father on the floor, and not having slept, arose between twelve and one, and prepared to awaken him. He looked at him for some time before he woke him, and thought, as an artist, what a wonderfully handsome man he was. The curls which he remembered on the night when he had crept from his bed to follow the poachers were but slightly grizzled as yet; many younger men might have exchanged locks with Tom Silcote without disadvantage. And in sleep, in quiescence while passion was dead, the face was extremely beautiful.

Strange and odd families, like the Silcotes, have a curious habit of throwing off a specimen or example of the family virtues or failings. The B—— did this, and one might say the same of other families; with none of which have we anything at all to do. The Silcotes did the same thing. I have only to say that the Dark Squire himself, who might have been anything, but who ended by being nothing had three sons: Algernon, who represented his geniality; Arthur, who represented, through the medium of an Oxford education, his priggish attorneyism; and Thomas, who represented his recklessness and ferocity, not to mention the personal beauty of the whole family put together. Miss Raylock says that the whole of the three, put together, would never have made up their father. "They wanted his *go* individually and collectively."

The one of them, however, who certainly represented the physical beauty, not to mention the recklessness and ferocity of this singular old man, was now lying asleep; watched by his own son; father and son alike being utterly unconscious of their relationship. Around the house, where he lay, artillery rumbled, shaking the house, and muttered away into silence eastward; squadrons of cavalry passed trampling; battalions of infantry passed with a steady, measured rustling, broken sometimes by a sharply-given word of command. The Austrian

army, already beaten, was moving eastward, 200,000 strong; and there was scarcely a man among them all who had so little business there as had he.

Of all the Silcotes he had wasted his life the most perversely, the most persistently. His fate should have been, by the ordinary laws of poetical justice, to die alone, unaided, uncared for, unwept. Yet his son was watching him with tenderness, and only disputing for his right to do so with the poor Princess, whom he had ruined. Is he the first instance of by far the least meritorious member of a family being the best beloved after all his misdoings?

The night was hot, and he lay with his great chest bare, heaving up and down with the regular breathing of sleep. His face was very calm, and James doubted very much if he did wisely in awakening him; but, after a time, looking at his face, he took his right arm, the unwounded one, and felt his pulse.

Colonel Silcote, without moving, quietly opened his eyes, and spoke.

"None of the whole of them left but you! They were all here just now. I was marching into Exeter, and overtook a weary girl under the hedges; and then I was at Dunstegan, and cut in before Tullygoram, and danced with a beautiful girl in spite of him. And the Devonshire girl and the girl of Dunstegan were one and the same, and had the same eyes. And I awoke, and found them looking at me out of your head. Boy, I am going to die."

"Nonsense, Colonel," said James; "your pulse is quiet: you will be quite well to-morrow. You are not going to die."

"Not here. Not in this bed. No! By heavens, you are right there, old boy! But the end of it all is very near; and, upon my word and honor, I cannot see very particularly why it should not be."

"You have many years of useful and honorable life before you, sir, I hope," said James.

"I don't hope anything of the kind," said Tom Silcote. "I have so many years of useless and dishonorable life behind me, that I begin to think that it will be better to close my account against the higher powers as soon as possible. If I were to mortgage my future career, with good behavior as interest, I never could pay it. The accumulation of interest would destroy the capital in a very short time. I tell you I *can't* behave well. If I lived, which I am not going to do, I might gain in time the respectable vices of old age. But it would take so long; I am so dreadfully young. You may depend that a fellow like me is much better out of this world than in it."

"I cannot see that, sir," said James.

"God forbid that you should. You are going to dress my arm; do so, and listen to what I say. You have a clear head and a good memory. After I am dead, I wish you to tell my father these things. I shall march to-morrow."

James promised to remember them.

"Nineteen years ago I was honorably married to a girl I met in Devonshire. The particulars of that marriage, my aunt, the Princess, has in a despatch-box, which I have given into her possession.

"I have great reason to fear that my father has been sadly abused about the conduct of his late wife, poor Algy's mother. If he can get hold of the Princess I believe that she is quite prepared to tell him everything. I fear that she and a man called Kriegsthum have used him very sadly; but he must be tender with her. He was fond of me once;

and you must tell him, now that I am dead and gone, and will trouble him no more, that he must be tender with her. Out of my grave I shall insist that. My aunt is in many respects the best of all. I insist that my aunt must be kindly used. Again I am sure that Miss Raylock knows now the whole of this miserable complication from one end to the other. If she does not, Kriegsthum does. Give me my haversack: it is hanging on the foot of the bed."

James did so.

"This Kriegsthum is a very good fellow, but a most consumed rascal. Here are papers which commit him to the Austrian Government, for he has been Italianizing, the scoundrel, the moment he saw there was a chance of our being beaten. Put these papers in the hands of my father, and he will bring him to book with them. My father was at one time one of the first and shrewdest lawyers in England. He is a perfect match for Kriegsthum."

"You must also give my love to my father, and tell him that I am sorry to have been so bad a son to him. I would not add that I could not help it, or that he might have been a better father to me. I wish him to discover whether my wife is alive or not,—his sister has the particulars of the marriage,—and to pension her. I had no family by her. You are hurting me."

"I am very sorry sir," said James; "I am but a clumsy nurse."

"I had no family by her, at least as far as I know. I should wish him to find her out and pension her, if she is alive. I behaved very ill to her, I fear. Have you done?"

"I have done now, sir," replied James. "You had better sleep."

"I have been sleeping; I cannot sleep again. I shall sleep long and soundly in a few days. Sit beside me, and talk to me."

CHAPTER LIII.

THE ENEMY ADVANCES.

A FRENCH officer, riding up to the first of the Silcote carriages, took off his hat and bowed low.

"I really doubt if it is safe for Monsieur to advance farther," he said. "Monsieur can of course please himself, but, until we have gained another victory, I would wish to point out to Monsieur that advance is, to say the least, dangerous. The enemy were here the day before yesterday. Some of them are here still."

He pointed to a few stark heaps which were lying in the summer grass, in the field to the left of the road. Silcote understood him at once.

"I thank you for your politeness, sir: we will go no farther. My dears," he continued, "dismount, and go into that house opposite: I will be with you directly."

Miss Lee and Mrs. Thomas Silcote did so at once. Mrs. Thomas knew from old experience that she was in the presence of death, although she had not actually made out the Austrian corpses. Miss Lee saw a look in her face which made her silent, and which caused her to follow. The two women silently left the carriage, politely handed out by the French officer, and went towards the house. The French officer remained. Silcote and Arthur leaned over the side of their carriage talking to him, while Boginsky came up from the second carriage, and stood beside the French officer's horse.

"Arthur," said Silcote, "there is some Moselle new here, and I am thirsty; get some. Monsieur, we are much indebted to you. I perceive that we are passing into the real regions of war. Has there been, then, an actual cataclysm?"

Boginsky and Arthur laughed at his pedantry. Being that Silcote laughed himself, the French officer, drinking his glass of Moselle, laughed also.

"We heard that there had been an engagement," said Silcote, "but we were not aware how near our British audacity had brought us to it. Are those blue and white heaps, lying there on the grass, actually Austrian corpses?"

"They are such, Monsieur, a small instalment."

"What is the name of this place?" asked Silcote; "and what are the details of the engagement?"

"This place is Genestrello. Beyond you see the heights and the village of Montebello. You have never heard of Montebello. No; nor did any one until yesterday. Yet Montebello will live in history beside Lodi and Arcola. We carried the heights of Montebello yesterday. It was only the first of a great series of victories. We have already demoralized the Austrians. The rest is quite easy."

"Ho!" said Silcote; "then it is all over. Arthur, give this gentleman another glass of Moselle. Can you give me any details of this action of yesterday, my dear sir?"

"With the greatest pleasure," replied the French officer. "Here at Genestrello the Sardinian light-horse, in command of Colonel Count Frangipanni, met the Austrian cavalry, under command of Colonel Silcote,—a compatriot of yours, by the way. Each regiment was beaten in turn, and the Austrian Colonel Silcote was desperately wounded by the Sardinian Colonel Frangipanni; after which the Austrians retreated."

"You hear all this, Arthur," said Silcote. "Can you tell me, sir, what became of Colonel Silcote?"

"He rode away after his regiment," said the French officer. "I know no more."

"Have you any other details of the engagement which you can tell me, sir?" asked Silcote.

"Well, I doubt it," said the Frenchman. "There was the Princess Castelnuevo, who charged with the regiment; and there were two young English artists, whom she took prisoners by threatening them with her revolver. Beyond that I know nothing."

"Altogether this looks pleasant, Arthur," said Silcote. "But we will go on, and see the end of it."

CHAPTER LIV.

THE PRINCESS'S TALISMAN.

"Is he dead?" said the Princess scornfully to James, coming up to him while he was quietly smoking in the sun in front of the Colonel's quarters at Pozzo d'Orno.

"Is who dead?" asked James, in surprise.

"Your new friend, Colonel Silcote; the man for whom I have sacrificed everything, and who has taken up with a boy like you; excluding me, and refusing to see me. Is he dead?"

"No, my lady. He is going on very well."

"He and I were both better dead. Will he see me?"

"My lady, he says he will see no one whatever."

"Except you?"

"Except me, my lady. He is a little off his head. He wants to fight again. I have told him that he is not fit for it; but he insists."

"And swears at you? Good!"

"He swears, certainly, but not at me."

"Would he swear at me, do you think, if I saw him?" said the Princess.

"I doubt he would, my lady."

"He has been doing it already, I suppose?"

"No," said James, suddenly and promptly. "If he had done it once, I should not have allowed him to do it twice. But he has not done it once. My dear lady, he loves you as well as ever, but wants to fight again, and thinks that you would dissuade him from it. If you saw him, and did so, he would swear at you certainly. I will tell you the simple truth. He has forbidden me to let you see him."

"This is the very basest ingratitude," said the Princess.

"On the contrary," said James, "he merely fears that you will persuade him to fight no more; and that he will not have strength of purpose to resist you."

"Have you been persuading him to fight?" asked the Princess. "No. I am a credulous and foolish woman; but I cannot believe that you, with your gentle young face, could be such a wretch, such a villain, as that. Any money which you may get by the murder of Colonel Silcote will be a lifelong misery to you."

James thought she was mad. "You have puzzled me two or three times lately, my lady, and you are puzzling me more than ever now. I have tried to dissuade the Colonel from fighting any more, and indeed have pointed out that he, as an Englishman, has no business to be fighting at all. But he is resolute. God knows I would stop him if I could."

The Princess seemed satisfied. She came and sat beside James on the bench. James put down his cigar.

"You are a young smoker," she said, "and are extravagant. That cigar is one of Tom's own regalias, and cost sixpence. I paid for that cigar, and consequently I know its price."

"I thought that the smoke would annoy your ladyship; that is all," said James.

"I see," said the Princess. "Your manners are very good. You are not one of those wretched young prigs of the present day who puff their tobacco-smoke into every lady's face as a matter of course, without any apology. But I regret to say that Tom has spoilt me in this matter. I like the smell of tobacco."

James of course took up his cigar.

"Now we shall be comfortable together," said the Princess. "You like cigars?"

"I like them very much."

"What else do you like?"

Arthur had put this question to him before; and he had answered "Several things"; but it was a very difficult question. He gave a general answer.

"I think that I like most things, my lady."

"Do you like jewels?"

"I dare say I should if I had ever seen any," said James. "But then you know I have not."

"They are very nice, these jewels," said the Princess. "Believe an old woman when she says that nothing satisfies the soul like jewels. A beau-

tiful young man is a glorious thing; a beautiful young woman is still more glorious. But they don't last. Your beautiful young man comes in time to look out of a bow-window in St. James's Street; and your beautiful young woman, — why as for her, she may become in personal appearance anything which you like to put a name to. Do you understand me?"

"I thank God I don't," replied James.

"But with regard to jewels. They never change. Look at this sapphire. This is one of the finest sapphires in Europe. None but a Silcote would wear it on a battle-field. It is a frosted sapphire, the very rarest of jewels, scarcely ever seen. Ten thousand years ago the stone was exactly the same. Seven hundred years ago a magician in Thibet engraved these letters on it, which, as you see, let the eye through the frosted surface into the wine-dark depth of the jewel. Do you see?"

"It is wonderfully beautiful, even to my eyes, madam."

"It is a talisman in fact. The magician sold it to Ghengis Khan; it descended to Kublai Khan; Kublai Khan gave it Maffeo Polo, who gave it to his nephew Marco; Marco, on his return to Venice from Genoa, gave it to the then Dandolo, from whom it descended to the Castelnuosos. The last Castelnuolo gave it to me, and I will give it to you — if you will let me see him."

"I doubt I should not know what to do with it, madam," replied James, extremely amused at finding himself named as last successor of a line which begun by an Asian magician, went through Ghengis Khan, Polo, Dandolo, and ended in himself. She had used the exact kind of humbug which a London-bred boy, like him, would be the first to detect and laugh at, and he did not care a bit for the jewel, though indeed it was perfectly unique.

"Will you take it?" said the Princess.

"I think not, my lady."

"I will see him," said the Princess.

"Then why did you not go in at once, half an hour ago, before you tried to bribe me? I have no authority to stop you; go in now. I think that you ought to do so. I certainly cannot stop you."

"I never thought of that," said the Princess. "How very curious. Well, here is the bracelet for you at all events. The setting is common, but it is a valuable jewel."

"I must decline it, my lady."

"I am glad of that," said she. "I will give you something else. Do you like rabbits?"

"Why, my lady?"

"Boys generally do, and I would have given you some. Or a toy terrier, or a set of cricketing things; or a boat; or a pair of carrier pigeons; or a set of Waverley novels; or anything which you boys like. But I am glad you did not take my jewel. I should have hated you if you had, I know. I would sooner bind myself to pay your expenses at Cambridge than part with one of my jewels. Well, then, I will go in and see him, and get sworn at. Is he alone?"

"He is quite alone. I must warn you, my lady, that his temper is very awkward. But it is right that you should see him. He will be furious with me, but it is right that you should see him. Be gentle with him."

"Gentle with him, boy? That I should be told to be gentle with him! Will he be gentle with me; with the woman he has ruined?"

"I fear not, my lady."

The room was darkened from the blazing ~~the~~ sun, and she could scarcely see him. He was ~~was~~ standing beside a window, the blinds of which were down in full uniform, ready for the route, tightening the buckles of his swordbelt."

"Is that you, Sugden?" he said.

"No, love, it is I."

"Aunt? Why, I forbade him to let you in."

"But I came, nevertheless. Don't swear at me. Tom. I only wanted one little kiss before the next battle. It was not so much to ask. Don't swear at me."

"Swear at you, Aunt?" said Colonel Silcote. "Am I a dog?"

"You do swear at me sometimes, now, you know. Let me have one more ten minutes of you. Let me love you, and kiss your dear curls once more. I swear that I will urge nothing. I swear that I will not urge you not to fight. Go; fight, my darling, if you will; and, if you are killed, I will abide the bitter end. Remember, Tom, that I am but a poor ruined old woman. They have all left me but you. Be kind to me for ten minutes. It is not much to ask. Only ten minutes."

She took out her little heavily jewelled watch and laid it on the table. "Only ten minutes of you," she said.

Colonel Silcote, with his sword clanking by his side, came to her and embraced her. "Aunt," he said, "I believe that you are the best woman in the whole world."

"I am only the most foolish," she said.

"I fear so also. Why could you not have given your money and your love to some one more worthy of them, instead of to such a worthless dog as your nephew Tom?"

"I don't know, I am sure. I suppose it was that I was fond of you."

She sat down, and he, taking a footstool, sat at her knees, as he had been used to do in times gone by, long ago, when his curls were purple-black, and not grizzled as now. Then his head rested itself in its old place upon her knee, and her hand found its old accustomed place among his hair.

"Like old times, Aunt," he said.

"I like the very old times," she answered. "I was thinking, just at that moment, whether, if my brother could see us two, the foolish outcasts of the family, he would forgive us?"

Colonel Silcote was not sentimental, at least in words, unless in the flurry and confusion succeeding a battle. He had been sentimental with James, certainly; but then James's wonderful likeness to his mother had something to do with that. Besides, he was suffering from the effects of a broken head.

"Do you know, Aunt, that the governor is on the whole a great trump? You may say what you like. I know how you have always backed me up; but, on the whole, it must be allowed that he has behaved much better to me than I have to him. I have done very badly. I don't think any one ever did much worse. I have done everything that a fellow could probably do, I think."

"You never drank, my darling," said the Princess, weeping.

"Bless me, no more I did," said the Colonel. "I doubt there will hardly be time to develop my character in that direction. I never thought of that

before. I quite forgot that I have one virtue left, until you reminded me of it."

"You were always a faithful and dutiful nephew to me," said the poor old woman.

"And showed it by ruining you, and, by your own confession, bullying you and swearing at you. Aunt, my dear old Aunt, for your own sake do face facts."

"I am always facing the most disagreeable facts," she replied. "If Kriegsturm is not a fact, I don't know what is."

"Aunt," said Colonel Silcote, "do you want to get rid of that man?"

"No. I rather like him, to tell you the truth. But he is very expensive."

"I cannot make anything of you," he said, testily.

"No one ever could," she replied.

He muttered to himself, "I won't swear the very last night, poor old girl," and then tried her on a new tack.

"Aunt, dear, don't you think there has been a deal of confusion, botheration, plotting, and humbug in our family for a whole generation?"

"A great deal too much. But it is I who have done it all."

"With my assistance. But don't you think that it is time for all this to end?"

"Most certainly," said the Princess; "but who is to unravel this fearful story?"

"I should say, No one. What the dickens do you want to unravel it for?"

"Will you, dear Tom, allow me to explain it to you in a few words?"

"If you attempt to do anything of the kind I shall leave the room at once."

"But you believe that I am innocent as a babe unborn?"

"Certainly; but then this is more to the purpose. If any wrong has been done at your hands to my father, you ought frankly to explain it. You ought to clear up everything: never mind the consequences, Aunt. It is right and not wrong. My father has been abused among you. Is it not so? Come?"

"It is true."

"Throw yourself on his generosity. You told me just now you were innocent. I believe you, although I do not understand the business. Prove that innocence to him, and I will go bail he will forgive you everything. He forgave me often enough. Now do, like a dear old soul, throw yourself on your brother's generosity; and let there be an end and finish of all these wretched complications,—complications so interwoven that I don't believe that any one but old Raylock thoroughly knows them from beginning to end. She does. Heaven save any friend of mine from hearing her tell them!"

"But your prospects, my darling?" said the Princess. "I have loved you, and striven for you through it all. I would rather have kept my jewels, dear, if it were possible; but I want my brother's forgiveness for you, dear, not for myself. And if we don't get his forgiveness for you, where are we? Never mind; it does not matter now that I have my fingers in your curls, and you are your old self towards me once more: what are a few bright stones? They are all yours. I only thought of your prospects."

"Bend down and kiss me," said Colonel Silcote, quietly. "Aunt, dear, expect the route every

minute. One complication will soon be removed from among the Silcotes. My prospects lie in the rice-fields towards Palestro."

Suddenly she rose up, and he rose also. And he, in a solemn humor before, got more solemn as he watched her. She began walking swiftly up and down the room, with her arms held up clapping and unclapping her jewelled hands rapidly, the dim rays of the sinking sun reflecting themselves on the agitated crystals, so precious and yet so worthless, as though there were lightning in the room. She made three turns, and then she spoke.

"I loved them, but I love you better. You are the last left to me after a miserable, worthless life. There are sixty thousand pounds' worth of them, and I will give them all to you, here on the spot, if you will let me have that little Czech doctor back, and let him invalid you."

"Aunt, you must be quiet; death comes to all men. Do you think that I could live in such miserable dishonor as that? Aunt, you must be quiet. Time is very short, and I expect my route every minute. Sit down."

She sat down, and began pulling off her rings. "The most of them are at Vienna," she said, "but they are all yours if you will be invalidated. See here," she added, "here is the great Polo sapphire with which I tried to bribe that boy to let me see you. It is in reality worth four thousand pounds. Take it, but be invalidated."

"Aunt, dear," said Colonel Silcote, with irritation, "if you could contrive to leave off making yourself foolish, it would be so much better. Don't you see that, if I am killed, your jewels are no use to me; and, if I am not, they are of great use to you. Besides, I have to say some important things I must go; my character would not be worth a rush, and you would alter your mind. The time is very short."

"Take this one jewel, dear, at all events."

"What, your sapphire! Well, I will. I may be taken prisoner; who knows," he said, more cheerfully, "and then it would come in useful. So will take it. It is an absolute gift, then, Aunt?"

"It is."

"Well, now, I have something more to say. Stay by me while I do a little job, and talk to me while. There are scissors in my travelling-bag cut off a large lock of your hair: we will wrap them in it, and I will hang it round my neck, and will direct it to be taken to you. A Frenchman will most likely do it, either on sentimental grounds, or in the hope of a very large reward from a real princess not knowing that the value of the jewel, even if he undoes the little parcel, exceeds any reward you can give him fifty-fold. You will see your jewel again, but it will not be yours. I destine it for some one else."

"You will come back again, and we will give a ball with the money, my dear. But if the jewel comes back alone, it shall be done with as you desire."

"Did you know that I was married?"

"Kriegsturm told me you were; but I did not care to ask too many questions."

"I was; and it was the worst thing I ever did. You do not seem surprised."

She was not. She would not have been surprised to hear that he had been married five or six times over, and was very nearly saying so right out, but did not. She said,—

"I think marriage is a good thing in the main. I am not surprised at your being married."

"I was married once, and only once; to a woman I would make my duchess to-morrow, were I but a duke. I left her in poverty and in obscurity. She may be dead. I have carefully banished her from my thoughts for many years, and she has as carefully refused to be banished; and the eyes of this young artist who has been nursing me have, strangely enough, brought her before me again more prominently than ever. I have done many evil things, but what I did to her was the worst of them all. Now to business. If the jewel comes back without me, sell that jewel, find that woman, and provide for her with the money. Will you do this? You will find the necessary papers in the despatch-box."

"I will do it, dear, certainly. But supposing all this misery happens, and I cannot find her, what then?"

"Give the money to this young artist. I love that fellow who has nursed me. She was the only woman who ever had the least influence over me for good. I treated her worse than any woman ever was treated; and yet, in gaming-hells and other places, that woman has often risen before me, and tried to scare me from evil."

"Have I had no good influence?" said the Princess.

"Scarcely, Aunt, scarcely. And yet, — yes. At a time like this I will say yes. Come, decidedly, yes. You have loved me so truly, so persistently, so uninterestedly, that you have had a good influence over me. Why you have loved me so foolishly and so well, I cannot dream. Yet now I, to whom the morrow is death, can see that your persistent and disinterested love for me has done much for me. It has shown me — at least now, when it is too late — that there is a life higher than my own miserable, selfish form of life. Your standard, dear Aunt, has been a low and foolish one, I doubt; but how immeasurably higher it has been than mine! But men in their pleasures are so selfish; women must share their pleasure, or they have none. See about this poor wife of mine, and tell her that I tried to forget her, but never could succeed; and, above all things, attend to this artist lad, James Sugden. Idiot Kriegsthum is of opinion that my father will leave him the Silcote property, but that is bosh. Make friends with my father, and tell him it is the best thing he could possibly do. I hear a sound at the door, which you do not. Old Algy is dead, and so I shall see him before you. Tell Arthur to cure his priggishness; he did me no good by it. Marry Reginald and Anne on the first of April, — for where should we all be if the propagation of fools had been stopped? There is nearly a twelvemonth before them; let them spend it in courting, and develop their folly."

"She don't like him," said the Princess.

"She has not seen his idiocy near enough, that is all. She thinks she can find a greater fool than herself. Put her fairly *en visage* with him, and she will give up the business as a bad job; she is quite clever fool enough to see that she will never suit herself with so great an ass again. Time is short; kiss me. You are still too young and handsome to kiss me before strangers. Let us part without scandal."

She kissed him, and said, "I heard nothing. Do not let us part while you are in this wild sarcastic mood."

"It has come," he said, and kissed her again. "Now attention, Aunt; you can hear now."

The door was thrown open by James, who was looking curiously at his father, —

"The adjutant, sir."

The adjutant stalked in, in a long white cloak like a ghost, clinking his spurs on the stones. "I have got the route, my Colonel; towards Ming. Are you ready to march?"

"I am ready, Von Gerolstein. Was I not always ready?"

"Too ready, my Colonel. But you are wounded and we had hoped that you were invalided."

"Do the men want another to take them in action, then?"

"God forbid, Colonel. They only hoped that things went wrong, they might creep back again. I rally round the kindest, best, and gentlest Colonel they have ever had. Are you really coming with us?"

"I am coming with you," said Tom Silcote.

"Then God deliver those who fall in our way," said the adjutant. "I will then sound to mount."

"Sound to mount," said Tom Silcote. "Good by, Aunt. James, follow as near us as you can, and take care of my aunt. Keep three or four trees in an irregular line between you and the artillery, always. Keep your horses' heads towards the French artillery always, because there may be time to avoid a *ricochet*, and the trajectory of these new cannon of theirs is very low; and don't ride over dead bodies, or apparently dead bodies. Our fellows tell me that it is in bad taste, and dangerous. Give my love to my father, Aunt. I won't disgrace the family."

The night was dark and moonless; only a few of the files nearest the inn, on which the light shone, could be seen with any distinctness; tall, solemn, mounted figures, draped in white, getting dimmer and more ghostly as they stretched out along the road right and left. Kissing the Princess, and shaking hands with James, Silcote mounted his charger and sent the word of command ringing clear through the night. The whole regiment began to wheel, to clash, and to swing into order; then, at another word, he rode away with his escort of sheeted ghosts, and the darkness swallowed him.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE BATTLE OF PALESTRO.

"My dearest Archy," said Miss Lee to Arthur, "how much farther are we to be dragged in the rear of the conquering army?"

"Farther than we want, I fear, my love. But don't object. Both the governor and my sister-in-law are bent on going on. Are you frightened?"

"No. I am not frightened with you. Still, I did not expect to be brought into the presence of death when I came, as I have been the last two days."

"I dare say not. Neither did I. It will do both of us good. We have looked on death too seldom. Mrs. Silcote does not mind it much."

"How she goes up and down among the dying!"

"And among the dead. I dread that she will find something, — some day."

"What do you mean?"

"Merely that those white and blue heaps which we saw at Genestrello were men of Tom's regiment."

"Arthur, how horrible!"
 "It is their discovery of this fact which makes them push on so fast."

"Good heavens! do they wish him dead?"
 "I think not. I think they have some idea that they will find him wounded. I cannot say what they have in their heads. They are wonderfully abdunded and quiet, and in continual confabulation with Boginsky. We had better walk faster, my own, and regain the carriages."

"Let us stand aside, and see this battery pass," said Miss Lee to her lover. "How beautiful it is!"

"You admire it more than anything in all this brilliant hurly-burly," remarked Arthur.

"I do. There is something in the rattle and rumble of artillery which attracts me more than anything. Yet how beautiful these French have made their destructive apparatus."

"Yet military beauty is but a barbarous and unartistic style of beauty. No painter has ever succeeded in making anything of it when close to the eye. The Chinese make their apparatus of war purposely hideous. I am not sure that their civilization is not in that respect higher than our own." And he walked dogmatizing in the old style under the mulberry-trees, with the French artillery passing them; and she hung on the wonderful words of wisdom which fell from his mouth, and treasured them up.

"Hark!" she cried, suddenly, burying her head in his bosom; "there it is again! That fearful ttering rattle of French musketry; and some awful human form ruined, maimed, or dead in three seconds. There is the artillery beginning. Arthur, take me away from all this. I cannot bear it."

"Other women do, and you must," said Arthur, quietly. "It will do you good. It will make you see what life is made of. Come, my love, the carriages are waiting for us."

"Mrs. Silcote, the Squire himself, and Boginsky were a mile ahead. They had got the carriages drawn up on the side of the road, and were having breakfast in the first of them."

"Where are those two fools?" said Silcote, while drinking his coffee. "Their coffee will be cold before they come."

"They dropped behind for a lovers' walk," said Mrs. Thomas. "They will be here directly."

"That too — that cousin of yours, Miss Lee, will spoil Arthur again. She will make him as great a prig as ever."

"I don't see that," said Mrs. Thomas.

"I do," said the Squire. "There is not a word he says but what she believes in. And at times he talks outrageous rubbish."

"For example —" said Mrs. Thomas.

"Not for example at all," said Silcote. "I am not going to give a specimen of my own son's imbecility to please you or any one. I only say that she believes in every word he says."

"But sure it is right for a wife to believe in her husband's opinion to a great extent," urged Mrs. Silcote.

"If he has been among men of mark; if he has been in the world; if he has heard questions argued, — she should trust him while discussing with him. But Arthur has heard little else in his life but crass common-room talk; and he generalizes on all things in heaven and earth on the shortest notice; and this woman believes that he is a Solomon. He will be a greater prig than ever."

"You used to have such a high opinion of his judgment," said Mrs. Silcote.

"Argumentum ad hominem," growled the Squire; "the real woman's argument. When I was fool enough to lock myself up for twenty years, I was also fool enough to believe that his folly was somewhat less than my own. What on earth is the use of quoting my own folly against myself? The general woman's argument is this: You said so once, and now you say so no longer; therefore you are inconsistent. Therefore it does not matter what you say, it is unworthy of attention. Will you women ever get it into your heads that what you call inconsistency is often the highest wisdom, — into your heads, the most inconsistent of created beings? I say that this woman will make him, with his schoolmaster ideas, a greater prig than ever."

"Yet a woman should surely believe in her husband," said Mrs. Silcote.

"Yes, if he really knows the world and its ways, and its ways of thought. But Archy don't."

"But they will hit it off."

"O, they'll hit it off fast enough. She is fool enough for anything. But she will spoil him: and he has been spoiled enough already."

"You are very disagreeable this morning, my dear," said Mrs. Silcote.

"It is quite possible," said Silcote, "because I don't altogether approve of this match."

"She has four thousand a year; she is beautiful; and you know you love her."

"That is perfectly true. And this is also true, that I am going to make Arthur richer than she is. If Arthur had ever done anything in the world, I could not so much care about his getting a wife who would simply flatter him. But then Arthur has done nothing. No one ever heard of him. And this woman is going to flatter him into the belief that he is the finest fellow on the face of the globe."

"What does it matter, so long as they are comfortable together?" asked Mrs. Silcote.

Boginsky the gentle interposed here, seeing that the argument was likely to get warm.

"My grandmother, the old Countess Boginsky, surnamed the Terrible, was a very remarkable woman, of German extraction, with a great knowledge of the world, and a wonderfully sharp tongue. She shut herself up for very many years in her Castle of Rabenstein, in the Teufelswald, and, like Silcote here, got herself the name in those parts as he did in England for being preternaturally disagreeable without cause, and for power of the repartee. My English is bad. Do I give offence?"

"Not a bit," said the Squire; who winced, however. "Go on."

"Madame, my grandmother," continued Boginsky in perfectly good faith, "was more *affreusement difficile*, more transcendently disagreeable, than ever was my excellent friend Silcote. Yet she was wonderfully clever. My aunt had a difficulty with her husband; indeed left him to go to my grandmother, and put her case before her. 'My dear,' said my grandmother, 'you should believe in your husband.' 'But I cannot,' said my aunt; 'he lies so.' 'My dear,' said my grandmother, 'recast his own lies for him, and tell them to him again the next day; he will then believe them to be originated by you, and you will get on charmingly.' 'But I cannot believe in them,' said my aunt. 'Tell them a few times, and you will get over that difficulty,' said my grandmother."

"Your grandmother seems to have been a very

le sort of person, M. Boginsky," said Silcote, using the words of Louis XVI. on a very sad occasion. His conversation seems to me to be very silly, fitable, and immoral," said Mrs. Silcote. "I wonder where those two geese are! I would sooner go to the deadly old music in staccato than such use. Your grandmother ought to have been deaf of herself, M. Boginsky."

He was not one of those who fulfilled every enactment in life, as madame has done," said Boginsky, "and I very much fear that she never fulfilled the duty of being ashamed of herself. In fact, I did not."

"We sit here in this burning sun, waiting for our geese, we shall quarrel," said Mrs. Thomas. "They are at it again: the French are engaged by now. Silcote, dear, we cannot get the geese forward farther; come with me on foot. Are you not angry with me?"

"Silcote laughed good-humoredly, and they got on and started along the road at once. Boginsky followed after them for a moment; looked at the stalwart figure of the Squire, and at the elastic figure of Mrs. Silcote, as they walked away; and he remarked, — "You belong to a strange nation, and you are the best pair of that nation I have ever seen. On earth do you propose to yourselves: are you got?"

"I got a little canteen out of the carriage, which I brought round him. He told the courier that they were going to the extreme front on foot, and that he would do the best he could. The courier urged the Austrians were massed on the left, and that the shot of the day was extremely doubtful. Could you not Boginsky persuade monsieur and madame to follow by their carriages? In case of a failure in the Austrian right, monsieur and madame would find themselves in irremediable difficulties. Boginsky perfectly agreed with him.

"We shall make a fiasco of a retreat if necessary. They are resolute to go, and I must go with them. Tell Mr. Arthur Silcote about our having moved forward. Don't move from here until he comes up, and take your orders from him." So he followed after the Squire and his daughter-in-law, and he quickly overtook.

"What!" said the Squire, "are you coming with this? This is kind. We did not think of you." "Do not think that you considered anything, sir, you made this determination of going to the front alone with madame. It is a very mad resolution. Cannot I persuade you from it?"

"Why is it mad? We have before us there, the husband, the other a son. We have talked of about him so much, that we have determined to find him, for we have both forgiven him. Is anything mad in that?" "Boginsky thought it a rather Bedlamite whim; he had long before been told that the Squire was mad, and that Mrs. Thomas was odd, and so he thought, but walked behind them, and found he had to walk fast too.

Squire and his daughter-in-law were talking as they walked. There came a heavy rain, without thunder, which wetted them all, and they walked on still, talking eagerly. Mrs. Silcote walked on the path to the right of the road, and Silcote walked on her left in the road. There were some artillery passing them, at a trot, taking

the right side, as they do on the Continent, the trooper on the right of the gun nearly red Silcote; Silcote merely put up his left shoulder, got out of the way, joining Mrs. Silcote at once, and beginning the conversation as ever.

Boginsky wondered what they could be talking about. He went up to caution the Squire, and overheard them.

"I am quite prepared for what you propose, dear," said the Squire, "as I have said a dozen times before this week. If he chooses to acknowledge without knowing of your great inheritance, I will give him another chance. If he is not man enough for that, you are a fool if you allow him to receive you."

"Might I ask, sir, once more," demanded Boginsky, "what is your particular object in this very same expedition?"

"We are going after Colonel Silcote," replied the Squire. "We have information that his regiment is in the extreme Austrian right. We wish to go towards the Austrian right."

It caused no particular astonishment to the Squire to see that Reginald was standing beside Boginsky; there was too much noise to be surprised. He had never thought it worth while to ask Reginald when he had come, and where was James?

"He is in the Austrian lines, with Uncle Tom and Aunt Mary. But I came away, and got lost through the rice-fields. I did not care to stay with them, for they are sure to be beaten. Uncle Tom calls me a fool, and Aunt is mad."

"Monsieur also is very mad," said Boginsky. "Will monsieur be so good as to cease talking in this excited way to madame on family matters, which surely may keep until this hell has burnt itself to cinders, to listen and to look? That is the Austrian right: will you go there after him?"

To their left was a field of blossoming maize, more than breast high, in which grew poplars, plums, mulberries, all now in full leaf, — a very little field which dipped, not a hundred yards away, into squashes, green rice-grounds, intersected by runnels of water, through which blue-coated soldiers were trotting and splashing. Behind, a hillock and a red-roofed building. Beyond, a vast cumulus of artillery smoke, driven away from them by the wind; so great and so vast, that it competed with the real cumulus of the thunderstorm which was rapidly approaching from the southeast. Beyond this gigantic gunpowder cumulus rose a distant squarely-shaped Alp.

So much for what they saw; what they heard was still more terrible. A chattering rattle of musketry close to them, getting more furious and more prolonged as it grew more distant; beyond, the staccato of rapidly-worked artillery, striking the ear. Boginsky was alongside of them now, and said, "That is the Austrian left: you will surely turn back."

But Mrs. Silcote said "No," adding, what seems to be improbable, that she had heard heavier firing from mere field-pieces before. "Reginald," she said, "you can guide us over the ground you passed yesterday?"

Reginald demurred strongly. It was a bad road enough on horseback, — utterly impassable on foot. He had great difficulty in getting through yesterday. The way lay on causeways, through rice-fields, and the waters were let out for irrigation. He almost refused.

are you afraid?" asked Mrs. Silcote.

"Yes," said Reginald, petulantly.

"What are we to do now, then?" asked Mrs. Silcote.

"Reginald, who could have guided us, turned coward."

"Why, we must go on alone, my dear," replied Reginald, "and leave Reginald and Boginsky."

"I am going with you, monsieur," said Boginsky. "I think that we are behaving like mad people, but I go with you. Come, young gentleman, think once again, and show us the way by which you think it is not safe," said Reginald. "We shall have to go under fire."

"Don't force the boy," said Silcote, in perfect humor. "Let us pull through it together."

"But he knows the way," said Boginsky; and he said some flowers of speech in his own language, meaning of which could only be guessed by Reginald's emphasis. "If you will go on this expedition," he said aside to Silcote, "I think that your chance lies with this young gentleman. And I don't think that he wants bribing."

"The infernal young coward," said Silcote. "I would bribe him fast enough, but I don't know what wants. I'll give him three or four thousand francs, if that is any good."

"He would take a bribe if you knew what to offer him," replied Boginsky.

"Let me bribe him," said Mrs. Silcote. "I will manage the matter for you. I will not wait for your leave. Here goes."

"Reginald," she said, "you will just be pleased to take us to your uncle's regiment at once, and as quickly as possible. Your grandfather emphatically orders you to do so."

And he said not another word, but went. He had been used all his life to being ordered, and had only just broken loose from James, the last person who had ordered him. He was not displeased to find himself ordered about again, even though the order was to go under fire. He was not physically afraid of going with them; he hated more the bustle and the excitement of the thing than the danger. Yet, by his ten minutes' hesitation at the 'alastro, he cleverly and dexterously disposed of all his chances of heirship which seemed so fair while his grandfather was in a sentimental mood about his wronged son Algernon.

"What a pity it is that Betts is not here; what we might do in shares, for instance, with the telegraph! A man with so much capital in hand as I have might have made a quarter of a million by the intelligence I have gained in the last ten minutes."

"I do not understand you, dear father," said Mrs. Silcote, as she took his hand to help her over a runnel in the rice-fields.

"I will explain," said Silcote. "That furious volcano, for which we have been pushing, has ceased its eruption,—there, you have slipped your foot in, and have wetted it,—you should jump farther; that furious volcano has ceased, and that means that the Austrian right is turned, and that they are in retreat."

Reginald and Boginsky had been going swiftly before them until now. She said quietly, "Call Reginald and Boginsky back."

Her voice reached them, and they turned to come. "Is the right really turned?" she asked Silcote.

"There is no doubt of it. Why this comparative silence, otherwise?"

"Then we shall see him. He is not one to be left behind. I shall see him, after twenty years, once more."

Reginald and Boginsky were beside them now.

"Is the Austrian right turned?" she asked. Boginsky pointed to a mass of scarlet and red on a hill, backed by the smoke of musketry fire, and said, "The luck of the Tedeschi has forsaken him. He would not be crowned, and so Hungary is avenged in bitter tears. The star of the Second of December is in the ascendant."

"I do not happen to understand your allusions," said Mrs. Silcote. "All I ask is this: Are the Austrians beaten?"

"They are most certainly beaten."

They passed on more swiftly now, for the way led out of the rice-fields, and passed round a low hill, whose few trees were ripped and broken by cannon-shot. Reginald, getting excited, guided them well and swiftly. The firing was getting less furious, and more distant.

They were passing over the ground which had been crossed by the division of Cialdini only a few hours before: and were among the dead. At first the corpses lay few and far between,—no wounded here, all killed by artillery at a long range: but as they went on they grew thicker and thicker. A few ambulances were standing or moving among them; and sometimes, when they were walking beside one, the shuddering defensive motion of an arm, or the ghastly stare of an agonized face, would tell them that some poor fellow had not passed the gate of death, but was too near it to care much whether he was succored or not. This was the fair work of musketry; and soon they came on the first white uniform lying solitary among the blue around. Boginsky took off his hat respectfully.

"The foremost man, sir," he said to Silcote. "The hero of the day. In '49 I prayed to be cold and stark like him in the post of honor. I can at the least take off my hat to him now."

Silcote only nodded at him, for a growing awe was upon him; Reginald was going so straight and so swift. Towards what?

"We are close to Ponte Minbriole, now," said Reginald, turning suddenly. "That is it among the trees."

"Why are we going there?" asked Silcote under his breath.

"They were there this morning," replied Reginald. "Aunt and James, and Uncle Tom. But they will not be there now. It is all silent."

Very nearly. There were a few live figures moving about, but there were more dead than living. A little sluggish stream, crossed by a stone bridge, against which abutted, over the stream, a low white one-storied house with a red roof; close by, among fine trees, was a mansion with a cupola which rose above them; a little farther away another, very like it. In front, to the eastward, beyond the woods, the war was feverishly growling itself into a temporary silence; but here, by this little bridge, there was silence, almost peace.

"There they are," whispered Reginald.

"There are who?" replied Silcote, also in a whisper.

"Aunt and James," replied Reginald, aloud. "That is aunt sitting down under the wall, and James is standing by her. I don't see Uncle Tom."

"Thank God," said Silcote. "He and his cavalry are far away, by now."

"O, I forgot to tell you," said Reginald. "His

regiment was ordered to the rear, and he saw that he was too weak to ride any farther, and volunteered to stay with the 11th Jägers. Did not I tell you that? No, by the way, I don't think I did."

"Stay back, all of you," said Mrs. Silcote. "The worst has happened, for I see her sitting there and rocking herself to and fro. No one has so good a right there as myself, as she, and James. Keep them back, Silcote. After so many years!—"

He had fallen quite dead, from a suddenly mortal wound, headlong on his face, which was only saved from laceration on the ground by the sword-arm, held up in defiance, upon which his face had fallen. He looked as though he was asleep when they found him, and then, when James raised his heavy head upon his knee, they thought he was alive; for death had come so sudden and so swift that the last fierce challenge had been but half uttered, and had left its expression in his half-opened mouth; and a dim ghost of the fury of battle was still looking at them out of his staring eyes.

It is very difficult to know what to say, and what to leave unsaid. The reader must place himself in the situation. The Princess was more experienced in one little attention, we shall all want some day, than was James. When that was done, she sat down and began rocking herself to and fro, singing.

Singing in a very low voice, sometimes in German, sometimes in Italian. Her grief was so deep that Providence in His mercy had dulled it. There was a deep, bitter gnawing at her heart, which underlay everything else; as the horror of his doom must make itself felt in the last quiet sleep of a criminal before his execution, let him sleep never so quietly. Yet her feeble intellect was for a time numbed, and, as James feared, mercifully crazed: it refused to acknowledge what had happened. These half-witted women can love wondrous well.

No help had come near them. James thought of his position. "The living," he thought, "are more than the dead. If I can get her away I will."

He made two or three efforts, but she only pointed to what lay beside them. The third time she answered him, "We must wait till he wakes." And then, believing that she was crazed, he said no more, and so stood against the wall, while she sat on the ground, rocking herself to and fro, singing in a low voice.

I suspect you will see sights like these, and far worse, if you follow the track of war. I have seen much worse in times of profound peace and unexampled commercial prosperity.

It was no surprise to James to see his mother coming swiftly towards them through the dead. He was perfectly aware of the direction in which Reginald had gone, and was sure that his mother would follow him to the very verge of safety. She had had previous experience of battle-fields: he almost expected her. But when, without noticing him, she knelt beside the dead man's side first, gazed in his face, which now, the conventionalities of death having been gone through, was dull, calm and expressionless, when she kissed him, and smoothed his curls—my hand is too rude to go on. When he saw all this he was both surprised and frightened.

Still more so when the poor Princess roused herself to say, "I know you, my fine madam: you are Mrs. Sugden. He belongs to me, I gave up all for him." And his mother replied, still looking on the dead man, "You were a good friend to him, and I

thank you; but I gave up more to him than you did. I am his widow."

The Princess could not understand this at first, but began her loud singing again. The next thing which James noticed was Silcote himself, with his great square solemn face, looking down upon his dead son.

Mrs. Silcote looked up in his face. "I won't reproach you more than I can help, my dear," she said; "but, if you had not made that concealment about my inheritance to me, this could never have happened. It would have been better that he had had it and spent it all a hundred times over, than that this should be."

Silcote bowed his head and said nothing. The next voice which was heard was that of the good Count Boginsky. "My dear friends," he said calmly, "to whom am I to address myself concerning arrangements?"

Silcote went away with him. "What would you recommend?" he asked. "This is a terrible thing for us, my dear Count. That poor corpse which lies there was once my favorite son; that lady kneeling by him is his wife. He had quarrelled with both of us, and we were pursuing him to force him into a reconciliation, and we find him dead and stark. Our only object was to renew our love to him, sir. He had been very extravagant, and had not treated her well, but we could have tamed him, and now he is dead. I cannot realize it. I meant to have forgiven him all for her sake, if he had only acknowledged her."

"You have forgiven him, have you not?" said Boginsky, who since the defeat of the Austrians was taking a higher line altogether.

"God knows I have," said Silcote. "But details I do not know how to arrange matters. I never was at fault before, but I am infinitely shocked and distressed. It is inconceivable at present, but it will be terribly conceivable soon. Can you arrange?"

"As a friend. You and yours have been good friends to me. I shall be in a different position soon. Will you give me the title of friend, as an equal, and let me manage matters for you in that capacity? May I order as I please?"

"You may order as you please."

"Then go to that poor Princess, your own sister, and comfort her, and win her confidence. Go and do that, Silcote. She has been a misguided woman, but a loving one. Go and save her heart from breaking. Now that he lies cold and dead, she has no one left but you."

CHAPTER LVII.

SUNT LACHRYMÆ RERUM.

AND so Boginsky went among the others while Silcote went alone to his sister.

She still sat on the ground. The movement of the others around her, and her jealous wonder at Mrs. Silcote having taken her place solemnly and silently beside the corpse, had aroused her, and had enabled her to pass into the second stage of her grief, that of terror. She sang no more, but sat and looked around her fearfully. At this time Silcote came and bent over her. She spoke first, looking wildly up into his face.

"Any time but now, brother," she said, hurriedly. "I know that I cannot die for many years. You

sproach me for the rest of my weary life for my wickedness towards you, if you will only spare me now. Any time but now. There is a great deal of deep horror on me at this time, which is too much to bear. All this is my doing. I have no right to ask for mercy; I have ruined your life and have killed him. I do not ask you to spare me only ask for a little time."

"Sister," said Silcote, gently.

"Do not ask to be spared, brother. I will bear vengeance you may put upon me. I only ask you to begin it just yet. I cannot repair the wrong I have done, I cannot replace the papers I stole, I cannot bring the dead to life. But I can bear my punishment. I only ask you to spare me just now. I know that you are just and hard, and that you will be hard and just with me; which will be terrible. I remember that I have not one human soul left alive in the whole world: except perhaps myself."

Mary, my dearest old girl," said the Squire.

"I beg your pardon," said the Princess.

"My good old Mary: my dear old sister. I will spare you."

The poor woman drew herself away from him. "Don't speak like that," she said. "You had better begin on me at once than speak to me like that. I know the cause," she added, almost quaintly, "you don't know everything yet, and so, if you forgive me now, I shall have to go through the whole business again. I wish you would leave me alone. I can do it all if I have time. But I am frightened."

"My dearest Mary," said Silcote, bending over her and kissing her, "you are amazed with this dreadful catastrophe. Can you listen to me? I will speak very slowly. I know everything, or believe I know everything, and will seek, if you wish, to know nothing more. Everything is entirely forgiven, even if it were a hundred-fold as much."

"It was Kriegsthum," said the amazed Princess. "It was he who committed that unutterable wickedness. She was pure and good, and I was innocent of that."

"Of course you were. But listen carefully, my poor Mary. Suppose that hellish device had been yours, which I never believed, I have so entirely forgiven everything that I could take you to my bosom just the same as I do now."

She repulsed him. "Not yet," she said. "I will not kiss you till you know the whole truth. Old Raylock can tell it. I am perfectly certain that you do not know the whole truth."

"If old Raylock does, most other folks do," remarked Silcote. "Come, Mary, don't reject me and my love after so many years' estrangement. Let there be an end of all this shameful, miserable plotting and counterplotting. We have served one another ill. You served me ill once forty years ago, and I have served you ill ever since. Let there be a finish and an end of it. By Jove, that is near!"

The thunderstorm which followed Palestro was on them. The lightning had struck a tree within sight, and the rain began to come down furiously. "We must move, sister," he said, and she raised herself on her arm. He took her into a little door-way in the wall of the little white house, and they sat down together on the ground side by side, as they had done often as children. In a minute or so her head lay upon her brother's breast, and she turned her eyes up into his.

"Is it really true that you are not going to be cruel to me, after all my folly?" she asked.

And he kissed her tenderly. "We will give the rest of our lives to one another, and to others. All hard words and hard thoughts must be buried in the grave which Boginsky is getting ready yonder. Let us sit here and watch the storm."

The war had roared itself into stillness, and the storm was past, leaving the Italian blue unstained overhead where they all stood, a silent party, round the grave which the hired peasants had just completed. It is by the side of the canal among the trees, in a very quiet place, quite out of sight of the village, or indeed of any building except one tall campanile, which rises from among the trees close to him, and seems to keep him company as he sleeps.

"I little thought how well I loved him," said Silcote.

"Few could help it," said James, quietly. "I did so, little dreaming that he was my father."

"I little thought that you two would meet, and meet so," said Mrs. Silcote. "God has been very good to you and to him in that matter. Come, and let us leave him to his rest."

They were all dry-eyed, and only the Princess had not spoken. Seeing that she did not hear him, Silcote took her tenderly by the arm to lead her away. She did not speak even then, only set up a low childish wail so mournful, so desolate, so unutterably sad, that the floodgates of their grief were loosened, and they walked away together with bowed heads.

CHAPTER LVIII.

SILCOTES.

THE oaks at Silcotes grew from gold to green, then grew golden once more, and then settled down into the full green of summer; yet stillness, or nearly stillness, reigned over hall and park, garden and forest. The perfectly-ordered machine, so long wound up, went on just the same, the least noticeable fact about it being the absence of its master.

The neighbors got excited and curious about the house, the more so as week after week went on. They met the horses exercising regularly, and the men looked much as usual. The deep wailing bay of the bloodhounds was still heard by the frightened children, whose mothers told them that the Dark Squire was away to the war, — a piece of information which made him seem in their eyes more weird and more dark than before. Everything, said the gossips, was going on just as usual at Silcotes, save that some most astounding family discoveries had been made, and, without doubt, Silcote was following the track of the Italian army.

People who had not called for years came and called now, out of sheer honest curiosity, a curiosity which was doomed to continual disappointment. Everything was unchanged. The lodge gates were opened with the greatest alacrity; lawn and drive were well kept; the flower-beds were blazing out as heretofore, and the gardeners were busy among the new French roses; the door was opened to the visitor by the butler and two men in livery, but "Mr Silcote was in Italy, and was not expected home at present." That was all that could be learnt.

Lord Hainault of course heard of all these things, and, with his worthy wife, wondered very much at them. He had seen but little of Silcote in his life, and what little he had seen he had not liked. He seldom had any personal correspondence with him, but he had taken it into his head that a common

should be enclosed: it was impossible that it could be done without stroking the Squire the right way, and so the Squire suddenly became a most important person. Lord Hainault began at breakfast-time by laying down the proposition that country gossip was just as bad as town gossip, and that he did not believe one half of what was said about any one. He instanced Silcote, and so persistently argued from that example, that he triumphantly proved to himself and his hearers, by lunch time, that Silcote was, in all human probability, rather a good fellow than otherwise. At all events he, with his wife's entire concurrence, ordered his horse and rode gently over through the wood to leave his card on Silcote, and to get his address.

"It is an uncommon nice place, this," he said to himself, as he came out of the forest into the glades of the park, and saw the way in which artificial order was growing out of nature. "A monstrous nice place; one of the best places in the whole county. What a sad pity it is that a clever man and a gentleman, as he is, should not be more civilized. The best landlord and the best farmer for miles, too. I will see more of him when he comes back; I feel certain that he is a good fellow."

And then he uneasily remembered the general and off-hand accounts of Silcote which he had been accustomed to give, and pricked his horse into a trot, and so came round the corner of the drive on an exceedingly fine groom, whose master was close before him. Lord Hainault passed the groom and rode up beside the master, a withered, handsome old gentleman, on a valuable cob.

"My dear Sir Godfrey Mallory!" said Lord Hainault. "You are riding far from home."

"I am only from Shiplake. I cannot ride far now. But I have a letter from Italy which tells me that Silcote is dead; and I, quite unconsciously, years ago did him a wrong, and I wish to find out whether there is time to explain my share in it in this world. I fear that Silcote has been sadly abused in his lifetime. He was not a bad fellow when I knew him, but jealous and ill-tempered. I wish I could have a talk with him. I have reason to believe that he has owed me a grudge about a very unhappy business in which I was innocent. I am not long for this world, and I cannot bear to leave a grudge behind."

"It is like your good-heartedness, Sir Godfrey," said Lord Hainault.

"You mean my good nature," said Sir Godfrey. "We selfish men of pleasure are generally good-natured. I should say that I have been the most good-natured and the most worthless man on the face of the earth. I can really feel nothing — not even this."

"Not even what?"

"Do you not see that the house is shut up, and that I am too late with my explanations?"

The house was shut up in reality, and the two rode forward in silence.

"Is your master dead?" said Lord Hainault to the butler, taking the bull by the horns.

"Master is alive, my lord," said the butler; "but we are in sad trouble; sad trouble indeed, my lord."

Sir Godfrey Mallory left his card and rode away, waving his hand to Lord Hainault.

"What has happened?" asked Lord Hainault.

"The young master is dead, my lord."

"Which young master?"

"Mr. Thomas, my lord."

"I thought he had been dead long ago," Lord Hainault. "I want Mr. Silcote's dinner." "Master is expected home at once, my lord," the butler; and so Lord Hainault rode away saying to himself as he went, "Well, that was well out of the way. Better the school-boy than him." And that was all which the coterie presented by Lord Hainault had to say about Silcote.

One part of the great Silcote machine which still in perfect order was the kitchen. Experts generally find that they make their very best after a rest. The Silcotes cook, not condemned to cook for servants, had had an idle time of two months, and had taken to fishing at Weymouth. But when Mr. Betts, the senior Mr. Sugden, Dora Silcote, and the children, arrived suddenly in the hall, he put aside his fishing-rods, and did his best. Betts knew what good eating and drink was, and was an old acquaintance of the test. Knowing that he had some one to appreciate his he put his soul into the work, and Mr. Sugden and Mr. Betts sat down to a very good dinner indeed.

Not that Mr. Betts had the slightest business to take possession of Silcotes. Sugden was true with him at St. Mary's when they got the news of Tom Silcote's death. There was not the slightest reason for Betts moving; but he claimed no credit for taking active possession of Silcotes. He put it to the Squire, "The moment I heard of it I came off. I did not let the grass grow under my feet, sir; I came off at once." Silcote himself was half-persuaded that Betts had done him a personal service by "coming off" so promptly, though he failed to perceive entirely why Betts should not at that particular occasion to kill his bucks and up his Madeira. But Betts did both these things, and perfectly persuaded himself the while that he was piling obligations on the Squire's head, which a lifetime of devotion on the Squire's part could never repay.

"So you did not see your way to the Italian campaign, Mr. Sugden?" said Betts, after the soup.

"Why, no," said Sugden. "I got so heavily used in the Crimea, that after a feeble attempt I gave it up."

"A wise resolution, nephew."

"Nephew?" said Sugden, raising his great, patient, handsome face to Mr. Betts.

"Certainly," said Mr. Betts, promptly. "Your sister married the late lamented Mr. Thomas Silcote. My daughter married his half-brother, Mr. Algernon Silcote. Consequently I am your uncle. Don't you see?"

"I dare say I shall in time," said Sugden. "Am I to call you Uncle Betts, then?"

"My dear sir, that is entirely a matter of detail; a matter entirely between man and man. I would not for an instant urge a man in your position to give such a title to a man in my position. Still, there are rules about these things, I believe, and it would be flattering to me."

"I will call you Uncle Betts with the greatest pleasure," said Sugden, "if you like it."

"My dear sir, not for a moment. Between men of the world, like you and me, such distinctions are invidious. If you could possibly induce Mrs. Silcote, your sister, to greet me with the title of uncle, I should have nothing left to desire in this world."

"O! she would never do that," said Sugden. "She is very proud."

"You are quite sure that she would not?" said Betts. "Then let us say no more about it. She is the leading member of the family which I have entered, and her wishes must be studied. It would have been gratifying to my feelings, but let it go. I and you have other claims on Silcote besides those of mere recognition. The instant that you and I heard of this lamentable misfortune we came off promptly and rallied round him. That is a service which he is not likely to forget. Silcote is not ungrateful."

"I think myself," said Sugden, painfully and with difficulty, but with honesty also, just like the mere agricultural laborer which he was, "that we had better not have come at all. There is death in the house, — the death of my sister's husband, which is bad enough; and also, from what I have gathered, disaster worse than death. It seems to me ill that we should be feasting here in the house of mourning. I am sorry that I came."

"There should always be a gentleman in the house at such times as these, my dear sir," said Betts.

Sugden wondered which of the two was the gentleman, and concluded, in his agricultural mind, neither; but he said, —

"We will not discuss that matter. Tell me about Anne Silcote. Is the business so bad as I have guessed?"

"It is as bad as bad can be, and there is the whole truth, Sugden," said Betts, thumping his fist on the table. "There are no servants in the hall, and Dora has not appeared; so I can tell you the truth in a few minutes. I am a vulgar man, and a cunning man, and a man who will only cease to scheme for money when I am nailed in my coffin. But I am not an ungrateful man. I am not the mere snob which you would judge me to be from my manners. Algernon Silcote took me in when I was a bankrupt beggar, and showed me the beauty of a morality more noble than my own. The Squire heaped favors after favors on my head, and put me in the way of having cash again in hand to turn over. I have turned that money over. If there is a man in England who understands the handling of money it is myself. I am rich again, richer than you dream of. I only stay at St. Mary's because I think my benefactor Silcote would like it. Yet I tell you, Sugden, that I would have gone into the Bankruptcy Court again to-morrow, have given up every pound which I owned, if I could have prevented this last terrible scandal."

"What is it, then?" said Sugden. "Here are the servants. Will you put those dishes down, and go away, if you please. Mr. Betts and I are talking business."

When they were gone Sugden resumed: "You seem to me to be two people, Betts," he said; "just now you seemed to me to be scheming about an utterly ignoble matter; and then immediately after you came out most nobly."

"I am two people," said Betts. "I was bred a share and stockjobber, and shall die one, and at times I try to be a Christian and a gentleman, like Algy Silcote, my son-in-law. Think it out for yourself."

"Well, I will. But about Anne. Is there anything like dishonor?"

"Utter dishonor, I fear, and utter ruin. She has gone off with a low Italian Austrian. A young Roman. Let us say no more about it."

"How did you hear it?"

"From a friend of mine, Kriegsthum. He is a

great liar, but he dare not lie to me. He has made the Continent too hot for him generally, by universal political rascality, and must get back to England. He would not dare to lie to me. He has feathered his nest here pretty well, for I made four thousand pounds over his last telegram from Vercelli, in which he told me that the Austrian right was fairly turned, and that the Austrian army would not face the French rifled ordnance. I am afraid that the poor girl is lost."

"I am deeply sorry for this," said Sugden.

"So am I," said Betts.

"You say he is a noble Roman?" said Sugden.

"And a great scoundrel," said Betts. "Why he is an *employé* of Kriegsthum's."

"When Italy is free," said Sugden, "he might make a good match for her."

"You have a good imagination," said Betts, "but he is a great scoundrel. Here is Dora."

Here was Dora. "Well, you two people," she said, "what treason have you been talking that you should have banished the servants? If you have done talking treason, I should suggest that they were recalled. If we are to take possession of grandpa's house without the slightest reason, I think we might make use of his servants."

CHAPTER LIX.

THE LAST RAMBLE.

"WELL," said Dora to Mr. Sugden, "and so they are actually due. It seems incredible."

"The Squire has telegraphed from London, and will be here in half an hour. So we shall see them all soon now."

"Not *all*," said Dora.

"All, with the exception of Anne and Reginald," said Sugden.

"And my father and Uncle Tom," added Dora.

"They are at peace," said Mr. Sugden; "they won't hurt. I wish that Anne was as well off as they."

"Do you believe this about Anne?" said Dora.

"Of course I do."

"I don't," said Dora, emphatically; "not one single word of it."

"You cannot quite help it, I fear," said he.

"I can help it perfectly well," said Dora. "The whole story is a very clumsy falsehood. I tell you that it is the very last thing which Anne would do. And I know something which I could tell you, if I chose; but I don't choose — yes, I do — no, I don't. Look at me, and I shall make up my mind."

Sugden turned his handsome brown face, as calm as a Memnon, as gentle and simple as a child, on hers. She looked at it for a moment, and made up her mind.

"Yes, I do choose. I can tell you what I never could tell Grandpa Betts. You are a gentleman, and he, though the best of men, is not. See here: Anne has done something very foolish indeed, I do not doubt; but it has been all done for spite, and nothing more."

"Spite against whom?"

"Against James, and against me," she said. "You see," she added, blushing, laughing, and gently taking his arm, "I have monopolized James, and she wanted to monopolize him herself. She has done something very violent and foolish in her anger, for she has a sad temper, but nothing in the least degree wrong."

"Reginald and she have quarrelled for the last time, that is all," said Dora. "They never did anything else. They never would have got on together."

"You give me some hope and comfort, my love," said Sugden. "I cannot help believing you while I hear your voice; but my reason is against you."

"O, indeed. Where did we get this report?"

"From Mr. Kriegsthum."

"Mr. Kriegsthum: a pretty authority! And one would be glad to hear Miss Heathton's account of the matter. Has she run away too?"

"That is a shrewd remark," said Sugden.

"Now I am going to ask you a favor. Let us get the dogs, and go round the old place for the last time."

"Why for the last time?" said Sugden, when they had called the bloodhounds together, and started down the drive towards the forest.

"You only half quote what I said, and alter my emphasis. I said over the old place for the last time. The old place is no more. In less than an hour there will be a new Silcotes."

"It is true, and a more happy one," said Sugden.

"Well," said Dora, "I don't know; I actually do not know. I remember once that Miss Lee read us that fairy story, I forget which (it is often enough quoted), which ends, 'And so they all lived happy ever afterwards'; and Anne remarked emphatically, 'Dear me, how exceedingly tiresome they must have found it, after such a delightful series of accidents and quarrels.' Do you know that I have been happier in this old house than ever I expect to be again? There, what do you think of that, for instance?"

"There is some reason in it, or you would not have said it, my dear," replied Sugden. "Why do you think so?"

"Well, Uncle Sugden (I am not quite sure yet whether you are my uncle or my aunt — *n'importe*; Grandpa Silcote is fountain of honors, and must settle the titles of the new Court), I will tell you why. My dear, in old times this house was a very charming one. There was a perfectly delicious *abandon* about it, the like of which I have never seen, or even heard of elsewhere. Coming as I did from the squalor of my father's house, this was a fairy palace for me. True, there was an ogre; my grandfather Silcote was the ogre; but then I like ogres. There was a somewhat cracked princess — a real Italian princess — in velvet and jewels; and I like people of that kind. Then there was a dark story, which we never could understand, which was to us infinitely charming; there was almost barbarous profusion and ostentation, which everybody — I don't care — everybody loves in their heart of hearts; there were these bloodhounds, which I hated at first, as a cockney, but which I have got to love as the last remnants of the *ancien régime*; there were horses, grooms, carriages, ponies, deer, as indeed there are now, with all their charm gone; and lastly, one could do exactly as one liked: one could revel in all this luxury and beauty, set here like a splendid jewel among the surrounding forest, without a soul to control one. And this was very charming, for I am a Radical."

"It was an evil and perverse state of things, my love," said Sugden.

"I dare say" said Dora; "but then I am evil

and perverse, and I loved it. I loved it against it; that was my prudishness. But now it has all passed away, I know that I loved it."

"You are quite sure, then, that the old things has passed away," said Sugden.

"My good — distant relation (I will excuse myself), — do you know that you are as foolish at times? Is not my Uncle Arthur going to marry my old governess, Miss Lee? Are they going to take up their abode here at Silcote? You have heard of this arrangement, have you heard you speak of it?"

"Then you think, my dear," said Sugden, "Mr. Arthur and his bride will be inclined to round and put things square."

Dora only looked at him at first. Her eyes were so strong as to the way in which she would "put things square," that she did not deign herself to speak of it at present. She is quite passed the question for a time.

"There is a chance that your sister, Mrs. Thomas Silcote, or, to be more correct, Miss Silcote, may be able to do battle with them squared. She is in high favor at headquarters, and is likely to remain so. She is an energetic, courageous woman, and it seems has great influence over grandpa. But she is one, and they are two, and she will have her work cut out for her. She will fight like a dragon for James, but James will be of no assistance to her at all. The Arthur Silcotes will beat her if she don't mind. However, we shall have a happy little household."

"My dear Dora," said Sugden, "you are very worldly."

"I am; I have seen the consequences of not being worldly, and, Uncle Sugden, I was trained in a hard school. I only know this, that I shall make James stick to his art, and be independent, for with this wonderful new happy family arrangement, I see nothing to prevent his being cut out of his grandfather's will to-morrow."

"He will have his mother's money, — four thousand a year."

"I know that. But it is an evil thing for a man to wait for his mother's money. He shall be independent of that before his mother dies, if I know my own will."

"You are taking a black view of things."

"I have been used to the darker side of things. I will be more cheerful directly. Let us see what has become of our old Silcotes, in this newer and happier *régime*. The delightful old *abandon* of the house is gone forever. Grandpa, our ogre, has forgotten his ways. Altogether, the old house will never be what it was before. I know that the new order will be better than the old, but I am wicked and perverse, and I hate it."

"You have talked yourself into hating it, Dora," said Sugden, "with what seems to me a great deal of common sense."

"Well, I do hate it at all events," said Dora. "They will spoil James himself among them."

They had come in their walk before the silent cottage, in which Sugden and his sister had lived for so many years. The fence was broken, and the bloodhounds which accompanied them had invaded the garden. The flowers, mostly spring flowers which Sugden had planted so many years ago, were all out of flower, and lying withered on the neglected ground, with the exception of two groups of noble white lilies, which stood on each side of the door, and a rose which they now choose to call the

before. I quite forgot that I have one virtue left, until you reminded me of it."

"You were always a faithful and dutiful nephew to me," said the poor old woman.

"And showed it by ruining you, and, by your own confession, bullying you and swearing at you. Aunt, my dear old Aunt, for your own sake do face facts."

"I am always facing the most disagreeable facts," she replied. "If Kriegsthum is not a fact, I don't know what is."

"Aunt," said Colonel Silcote, "do you want to get rid of that man?"

"No. I rather like him, to tell you the truth. But he is very expensive."

"I cannot make anything of you," he said, testily.

"No one ever could," she replied.

He muttered to himself, "I won't swear the very last night, poor old girl," and then tried her on a new tack.

"Aunt, dear, don't you think there has been a deal of confusion, botheration, plotting, and humbug in our family for a whole generation?"

"A great deal too much. But it is I who have done it all."

"With my assistance. But don't you think that it is time for all this to end?"

"Most certainly," said the Princess; "but who is to unravel this fearful story?"

"I should say, No one. What the dickens do you want to unravel it for?"

"Will you, dear Tom, allow me to explain it to you in a few words?"

"If you attempt to do anything of the kind I shall leave the room at once."

"But you believe that I am innocent as a babe unborn?"

"Certainly; but then this is more to the purpose. If any wrong has been done at your hands to my father, you ought frankly to explain it. You ought to clear up everything: never mind the consequences, Aunt. It is right and not wrong. My father has been abused among you. Is it not so? Come?"

"It is true."

"Throw yourself on his generosity. You told me just now you were innocent. I believe you, although I do not understand the business. Prove that innocence to him, and I will go bail he will forgive you everything. He forgave me often enough. Now do, like a dear old soul, throw yourself on your brother's generosity; and let there be an end and finish of all these wretched complications,—complications so interwoven that I don't believe that any one but old Raylock thoroughly knows them from beginning to end. *She* does. Heaven save any friend of mine from hearing her tell them!"

"But your prospects, my darling?" said the Princess. "I have loved you, and striven for you through it all. I would rather have kept my jewels, dear, if it were possible; but I want my brother's forgiveness for you, dear, not for myself. And if we don't get his forgiveness for you, where are we? Never mind; it does not matter now that I have my fingers in your curls, and you are your old self towards me once more: what are a few bright stones? They are all yours. I only thought of your prospects."

"Bend down and kiss me," said Colonel Silcote, quietly. "Aunt, dear, expect the route every

minute. One complication will soon be removed from among the Silcotes. My prospects lie in the rice-fields towards Palestro."

Suddenly she rose up, and he rose also. And he, in a solemn humor before, got more solemn as he watched her. She began walking swiftly up and down the room, with her arms held up, clasping and unclasping her jewelled hands rapidly, the dim rays of the sinking sun reflecting themselves on the agitated crystals, so precious, and yet so worthless, as though there were lightning in the room. She made three turns, and then she spoke.

"I loved them, but I love you better. You are the last left to me after a miserable, worthless life. There are sixty thousand pounds' worth of them, and I will give them all to you, here on the spot, if you will let me have that little Czech doctor back, and let him invalid you."

"Aunt, you must be quiet; death comes to all men. Do you think that I could live in such miserable dishonor as that? Aunt, you must be quiet. Time is very short, and I expect my route every minute. Sit down."

She sat down, and began pulling off her rings. "The most of them are at Vienna," she said, "but they are all yours if you will be invalidated. See here," she added, "here is the great Polo sapphire, with which I tried to bribe that boy to let me see you. It is in reality worth four thousand pounds. Take it, but be invalidated."

"Aunt, dear," said Colonel Silcote, with irritation, "if you could contrive to leave off making yourself foolish, it would be so much better. Don't you see that, if I am killed, your jewels are no use to me; and, if I am not, they are of great use to you. Besides, I have to say some important things. I must go; my character would not be worth a rush, and you would alter your mind. The time is very short."

"Take this one jewel, dear, at all events."

"What, your sapphire! Well, I will. I may be taken prisoner; who knows," he said, more cheerfully, "and then it would come in useful. So I will take it. It is an absolute gift, then, Aunt?"

"It is."

"Well, now, I have something more to say. Stay by me while I do a little job, and talk the while. There are scissors in my travelling-bag; cut off a large lock of your hair: we will wrap this in it, and I will hang it round my neck, and will direct it to be taken to you. A Frenchman will most likely do it, either on sentimental grounds, or in the hope of a very large reward from a real princess, not knowing that the value of the jewel, even if he undoes the little parcel, exceeds any reward you can give him fifty-fold. You will see your jewel again, but it will not be yours. I destine it for some one else."

"You will come back again, and we will give a ball with the money, my dear. But if the jewel comes back alone, it shall be done with as you desire."

"Did you know that I was married?"

"Kriegsthum told me you were; but I did not care to ask too many questions."

"I was; and it was the worst thing I ever did. You do not seem surprised."

She was not. She would not have been surprised to hear that he had been married five or six times over, and was very nearly saying so right out, but did not. She said,—

wing." And then she passed under the shadow of the porch and into the old hall, where the bloodhounds lay about; and Dora, looking from her dim window-seat saw her stalk along, imperial, majestic, with her face set, with uneasy lips, with eyebrows drawn together, and with staring eyes, which saw what was not there.

But by this time the second carriage had unloaded itself.

The meeting between Miss Lee and Dora had something of humor in it. Dora had never thoroughly liked Miss Lee, and had seen and remembered a very great many indiscretions which Miss Lee, under present circumstances, would have liked her to forget. Yet Dora had not forgotten them, and Miss Lee knew it. They were, therefore, both on their dignity. When the poor Princess and her brother had passed her in the hall, she came out into the porch, and met her old friend-enemy, Miss Lee, face to face.

Miss Lee was dressed up to the point which is expected of every lady with four thousand a year, and Dora, having been dependent on Mr. Betts, by no means a liberal outgiver, was somewhat dowdy and shabby. Yet Dora held the key of the position in her pocket, and knew it, as did likewise Miss Lee herself.

"How do you do, my dear Dora?" said Miss Lee.

"How do you do, Miss Lee?" said Dora, looking very calmly at her.

"I am very well, indeed, my dear Dora," said Miss Lee.

"I am exceedingly glad to hear it," said Dora. "I am afraid that your nerves must have been shaken by the war."

"Not at all," said Miss Lee. And then there was a pause. Dora would have died sooner than have spoken next, and, to tell the truth, not only Miss Raylock, but Arthur himself, remained perfectly silent; "for," as Miss Raylock expressed it, "Miss Lee had been giving herself airs."

Miss Lee had to speak first, accordingly. "My dear," she said, "will you give me a kiss?"

"With the greatest pleasure," replied Dora.

"I hope we shall be very great friends, Dora."

"I am sure I hope we shall," was the reply.

CONCLUSION.

So comes one more long story to an end. Nothing remains but to give the various characters their departure, and to finish one of the most difficult efforts of story-telling ever attempted.

I hear people asking about such and such a story, "Does it end well?" as if that mattered. How can a story of deceit, folly, and selfishness like this end entirely well? It ends as well as it can. As people make their beds, so they must lie on them.

Silcote by degrees became possessed of all the circumstances with which our reader is already acquainted, with regard to his relations with his wife, which were chiefly brought about through the foolishness of his poor sister. Kriegsthum, having been forced back to England, in consequence of the danger incurred from the continental democrats, took a house in Camden Town, and, being rather short of cash, wrote to Silcote, offering to tell him the whole truth, from beginning to end. Silcote went to him at once, and learnt from him and his

head-agent in the villany, all the details. He paid him his money, asking him if he did not think it self the greatest scoundrel in Europe? To this Kriegsthum answered, "No, not by many greens"; and laughed.

Silcote was now aware that he had by his jealousy and reticence caused the death of a good and gentle woman, and of an innocent and true wife. He spoke to Mrs. Tom Silcote in strong language of the never-dying remorse which such a discovery would entail; yet that remorse was very little visible after all, from a variety of reasons.

If he had been still alone, still isolated from human sympathies, no doubt that remorse would have been very great, — nay, it was relatively very great. He would probably have maddened himself in some new phase of folly with it. But many circumstances prevented his doing this, which it would be well to consider.

The business was so very, very old. Above any years old. Very few men are capable of feeling acute remorse for actions done so long ago, although they may use excited language about them, as did Silcote. To feel remorse acutely, the image of the victim or the sin must be close to the mind's eye: at least, closer than a space of from forty to fifty years. He still had a great tenderness for his poor wife, but he was getting old: it was very long ago; and his love for her had been turned into fumes and as he thought, righteous indignation against her for so many years, that he was unable to obliterate the half-century during which he had regarded her as a monster of wickedness, and take up his love for her again as fresh as ever. He was unable to carry out the ideal programme which he had announced to Mrs. Thomas. He was regretful and repentant. But of practical acute remorse, with its usual symptoms, there was none.

There were other reasons against this phase of mind: almost innumerable. The break in his habits, when he had left his unnatural solitude to go into the very thickest of the first of these newly-invented, sudden, bloody, and decisive wars, had somewhat dazed him, and put old matters very far away indeed. He had, again, been very fond of his son Thomas, and had always, in his heart of hearts, thought of a reconciliation between them as a matter of course. He had pursued him under fire with the intention of being reconciled to him, and had found him lying stark, stiff, and stone-dead under the poplars by the mill wall at Montriolo, watched by his half-crazed aunt and his unacknowledged son. This alone was enough to put old disasters out of his mind.

Then, again, Anne. He had been very fond of Anne; and had, in his newly-awakened recklessness, sent her abroad with a somewhat foolish governness. In spite of Dora's purely imaginary defence of her (which did Dora great credit), Anne had made an awful fiasco. She had turned Roman Catholic in order to be married to the young Roman gentleman whom Kriegsthum, in one of his puzzled fits, had set on to watch James, and was figuring away at Naples with him, with the moneys which had been intrusted to Miss Heathton, her governness, for their mutual subsistence. Reginald and she had had an interview, previous to her escapade, in which she told Reginald that she had never cared for him in the least, but was in love with James, and always had been. After which she went to Naples, as we have seen; and Reginald, having no one to direct him, went to Inns-

— why or wherefore we shall never know, — and wrote to his grandfather from that place, telling him that he had carefully examined the various relations in which he stood to his fellow-men, that he had arranged to commit suicide, and that by the time these lines reached him (the distracted Squire), he, Reginald, should be no more.

He did not do anything of the kind, but exhibited a feeble, pretty picture at the Dudley last year. Still Silcote, having believed in his own nonsense for so many years, was able to believe in Reginald's. This, however, was one of the smallest of his troubles. Any one, no matter how sensitive, would have forgotten an old trouble, on the basis of which this story has been written, in the face of the new troubles which arose and confronted him on every side.

It is extremely disagreeable to me to allude to such a half-reputable *fiasco* as that of Anne. I do not deal in such wares; you must go elsewhere for them; but it is still more disagreeable for me, a man whose principal desire is to please, to allude to the relations between Mrs. Thomas Silcote (Mrs. Sugden) and Mrs. Arthur Silcote (Miss Lee).

As long as they were mere cousins and co-heiresses they got on capitally together. They were both extremely High Church, took in the same paper, and understood one another perfectly. Nothing could be more perfect than their accord.

Then came in Arthur: of the liberal Oxford minority, who had, to tell the plain truth, pitched Miss Lee overboard, until she got her fortune. Miss Lee was very rapidly converted to his views, as Dora had often prophesied. But, then, Mrs. Tom Silcote stuck to her High Churchism in the most strenuous manner. There never was such a difference in this world. It was two to one against Mrs. Thomas, for Miss Lee had gone over to the enemy. Everything which Arthur said she swore to. It was no use for Mrs. Thomas to "taunt" her with previously-expressed opinions. Mrs. Arthur replied merely that she knew better now.

And, again, there was something between these ladies which was possibly more important than any merely religious difference. It was the question of the succession to Silcote's enormous wealth. Arthur, as an independent bachelor, was one person: Arthur married, with his announcement out to the whole county of a probable heir, was quite another person. While a bachelor, in precarious health, he could well afford to pooh-pooh his father's intention of making him heir: he spoke sincerely when he rudely declined the honor. But now, with a showy and beautiful wife, of whom he was proud, and who took him into society, things were very different. He began to feel the value of the prestige which a beautiful and rich wife gives a man, and to be less and less patient of the idea of living principally on her money. And Silcotes was one of the finest places in the country, and she was naturally mistress of it, — would certainly be, according to his father's present will, could he only undermine Mrs. Thomas's enormous influence with his father, which was now greater than his own.

As for Mrs. Thomas, she was perfectly determined that James should marry Dora, and that the Thomas Silcote and the Algernon Silcote interests should coincide, and bring James in triumphantly as master of Silcotes. To further this object she persistently kept the Squire's old grievances before him. She continually, though with the finest tact, urged the claims of Dora, the child of his ill-used son Alge-

non, upon him, and gently and calmly laid death of Thomas Silcote at his door-step, as she done in sober earnest at the battle of Palestine. Her case was a very strong one, and she was quite a match for Arthur.

Now, seeing that these people all lived in same house together for over a year at the Squ expense, that they were all of them very respectable people, and that they were always, night or day, ready for one another, it is no wonder that at the end of a twelvemonth the Squire had so far forgotten his old life in this new one as to consult Betts at the best route to Australia, affirming positively that he could stand it no longer, and should emigrate.

"What part of Australia do you want to go to?" asked Betts.

"Don't know," said Silcote. "I only want to get out of this."

"If you can't tell me where you want to go, can't give you the route," said Betts. "But don't you see it's all allegory; you want to get out of all this, and don't wonder. Which party do you wish to join? There!"

Silcote could be downright as well as B. "Arthur and his wife," he replied.

Betts whistled. "You are a bold man, Squire. There is life in the old hound yet. Why?"

"Because I cannot do without Mrs. Tom. I want to end my life with her. And I don't like Art and his wife; they are far too fine for me. They are beginning to give dinner-parties here now, and show me off like a bear which they have tamed, and I am etcetera'd if I stand it. Tom's wife is worth fifty of them."

"Who is to have Silcotes?" asked Betts. Silcote replied, "That is a home question."

"So it is," said Betts. "I can't help you until it is answered, though."

"Well, then, James and Dora," said Silcote, "and that is what makes the business so intolerable. I will provide for Arthur splendidly, — at once he wishes it; but Tom's son and Algernon's daughter shall have Silcotes. You may call me a fool, you like, but so it will be."

"I don't call you a fool," said Betts; "I think you are doing wisely and well."

"But how am I to get rid of Arthur?"

"Why, — let me see; he is out shooting now, wait till he comes home, and tell him of the determination you have come to."

"I dare not," said the Squire.

"You must," said Betts. "You shall. If you don't, I will; and so I do not deceive you."

"But how?" said Silcote.

"Announce to him the immediate marriage of James and Dora," replied *πολυμήτης* Betts; "then explain this matter to him, and immediately afterwards have those two married, just to show you in earnest."

"They are full young," said the Squire.

"None too young, and they have plenty of money. Lor' bless you! carpenters and blacksmiths, and such people, habitually marry at the age, without a week's wages to the good. You can knock 'em up a couple of thousand a year among you. Let 'em marry at once. Put your hand to the prettiest thing ever done. Let us see one more beautiful thing before we die, Silcote. We have seen but few pretty things in our lifetime: let us see one more before we take to the chimney-corner on our way to the churchyard. Come, my ge-

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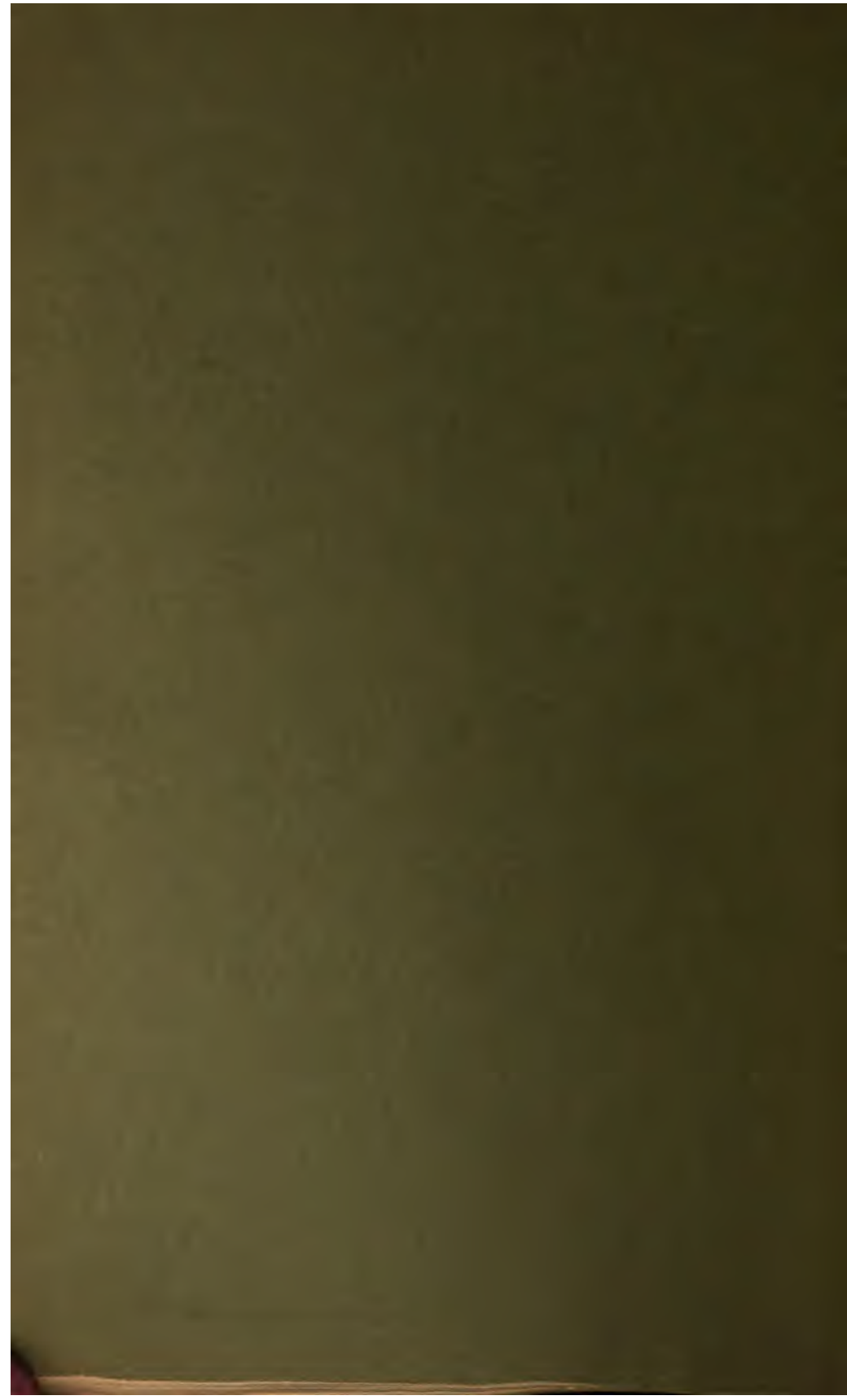
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